Hello Again, Wildlife Students!

Well it’s that exciting time of the year. Classes are ending and summer jobs are beginning! Before you head out into the woods, plains, swamps, or some other habitat type, the SDWG wanted to update you on a few items. Despite the time of the year, it’s never too early to be thinking about the annual conference this fall. This year’s meeting is in Winnipeg, Manitoba. That means a passport is required to travel to and from the conference for all you U.S. students. Don’t worry! We have a section in the newsletter to help you obtain one. Plus find stories on TWS conclaves from across the country and student member experiences. Lastly, we will be sending out a survey in the near future. We want to ask YOU what’s most important in the working group, how we can better serve you, and what we can do to accomplish that. Again your working group is meant to serve you, and we want to do that to the best of our abilities. If you have any concerns, questions, or you would like to get involved in the SDWG, feel free to give me a shout any time!

Good luck this summer!

Matt Gould, Chair

During the 2015 Joint Annual Meeting of the Arizona and New Mexico chapters this February, Erin Saunders from Northern Arizona University, our secretary, won the student wildlife presentation competition. Our own president, Matt Gould of New Mexico State University was the runner up.
The 2015 Southeastern Conclave: Update

*Phillip Stephenson: University of Arkansas*

The Wildlife Society’s Southeastern Conclave took place March 12 through March 15, 2015 in Smith Mountain Lake, VA. The first Southeastern conclave was hosted in 1972 by the University of Tennessee and has changed host schools every year since. This year the Virginia Tech student chapter hosted the event at the W. E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center located on the beautiful Smith Mountain Lake.

This event attracted more than 400 students and their advisors from 22 student chapters throughout the Southeast. Student chapters ranged in location from Frostburg, Maryland all the way to Baton Rouge, Louisiana and varied in size between just a few attendees to a slew of participants. This event annually hosts a great number of student participates from all walks of life and slightly differing wildlife curriculums. I had the opportunity to speak with many of the participants about their upcoming summer jobs or plans and it was amazing the variety and geographic range they will be covering. I also had the chance to see some familiar faces, allowing me to catch up with old friends and see where the road has taken them since we last saw each other. The Southeastern Conclave has always created an atmosphere for students to mingle and learn from one another. The friendships they have made will surprise them as they continue their careers. They will possibly work with each other one day as peers or will collaborate on research as colleagues. These networking opportunities are more valuable than we ever really imagine.

During the Conclave, several competitions for students were held, including: quiz bowl, a team competition, game calling, and a variety of individual competitions (intellectual, physical, or artwork). Each student chapter was scored and ranked based on their performance in all team and individual competitions, with the team competition and quiz bowl having the largest impact on overall score.

The University of Tennessee – Knoxville’s Student Chapter placed first overall in the TWS Southeastern Conclave. University of Georgia’s Student Chapter placed second and Frostburg State University’s Student Chapter placed third.

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The 2015 Southeastern Conclave: Update (Cont.)

During the quiz bowl, two teams of four players face off against each other and answer as many wildlife-related questions as they can within the time limit. Multiple rounds take place over a two-day period until only two student chapters’ teams remain with the winning team becoming the quiz bowl champion. The University of Georgia won 1st place in Quiz Bowl for the 20th time in the Southeastern Conclaves’ 43 year history. The University of Arkansas – Fayetteville and West Virginia University competed in their first quiz bowl this year and are ready to compete again on the big stage.

During the team competition, stations are set up along a trail and student chapters are allowed five to six minutes to complete the questions at each station. Questions cover a wide variety of natural resources-related topics including, but not limited to, plant and animal identification, equipment usage, techniques, and habitat assessment.

Students also had the option to attend a field trip or workshop of their choice during the weekend. The workshops were both fun and informative and included topics such as falconry, human-wildlife conflicts, camera trapping, and dendrology.

Darren Miller, the Southeastern Section Representative to TWS Council, was also present at the Conclave and acted as a moderator for the quiz bowl. Miller has volunteered as a moderator for many years.
Cooperation between Grads and Undergrads for a Better Field Season: Tips for working together to promote a successful and positive work environment

Allyssa Kilanowski, Hannah Moore, and Amanda Veals
University of Arizona

This article is meant to be a source of advice for both graduate students starting their field work this summer and undergraduate students that are preparing to work as a technician for a research project. We wanted to provide insight into both the graduate and undergraduate student perspective of what collaboration for a better field season looks like. We have gathered anecdotes, tips, and general guidelines for both undergrad technicians and graduate managers on how best to cooperate with one another. Two University of Arizona students, Allyssa Kilanowski, a master’s student studying behavioral phenotypes and juvenile dispersal, and Hannah Moore, a fisheries undergraduate student with a passion for food web dynamics, have come together to compile some great advice that we hope students will take with them as they enter their field season. The people you work with can make or break your reputation, which is why strong collaboration between graduate and undergraduate students is so important for both students. We aim to provide a single source of information for how best to enter your summers of research together.

Graduate Perspective: Tips for being an effective manager- Allyssa Kilanowski

Summer internships are all about learning new skills, for both graduates and undergraduates. Graduates learn management, mentoring, and leadership skills, while undergraduates learn field techniques, data management, and collaboration skills. Given that both parties are learning during a summer internship, graduates and undergraduates need to communicate and respect each other to ensure a successful and productive summer.

What makes a successful intern?

When graduates are interviewing students for summer positions, we all look for a few key personality traits. We are not necessarily going to hire the student with the most experience. While having hands-on experience, such as small mammal trapping or chemical immobilization, can help you receive a job, graduate students expect that we will need to train you in our specific methods. Other skills, therefore, become more important than previous field experience. Graduates want undergraduate colleagues that demonstrate dedication, the ability to learn new skills quickly and efficiently, organization, a positive attitude in tough environments, strong communication skills, the ability to problem-solve, and independence. This list sounds like a lot of requirements, but all these skills you can gain and demonstrate without any previous field experience. Many graduates value these skills because we have massive quantities of work to accomplish during our very short field seasons. We need colleagues that can quickly learn any new information given to them, students that will work hard to help us achieve our summer research goals, and most importantly students that we can trust to work independently when we have to leave for summer conferences. For graduates, putting our research into someone else’s hands is frightening. Doing so requires a lot of trust and therefore skills such as communication, independence, and problem-solving are equally important to actual field skills.

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How to work well together

The key to a successful working relationship is communication between both the graduate and undergraduate. One method that I found to be particularly helpful, both when I was an undergraduate performing internships and as a graduate student, is to have a minimum of three meetings throughout the summer. The first meeting is to outline expectations, for both the graduate and undergraduate. I recommend creating a written document with the expectations for both parties so that each person has a copy for their records. This initial document should contain details on what the graduate student wants the undergraduate to accomplish or learn over the summer. For example, the student is expected to learn radio-telemetry or the student will work independently for 5 days while the graduate is at a conference. The graduate should not forget to create expectations for their own summer activities. For example, the graduate is expected to teach all skills necessary, or the graduate will provide transportation to/from the field site. The expectations can be as detailed as you like, but I would recommend that you include a brief job description on this document and a list of all expected duties. Having these expectations clearly described is important in case there is conflict later.

The second meeting should occur approximately halfway through the summer to serve as a progress report for both parties. Graduates should tell the student what they are doing well and what needs improvement. This meeting outlines for the undergraduate the items that would go in a letter of recommendation based on work performed up to this point. Graduates should also ask for feedback in return. For example, what skills did the student want to learn that they haven’t, or does the student feel the workload is appropriate? These discussions can be difficult, but if both graduates and undergraduates approach this progress meeting with respect and consideration for each other’s opinions, then both of you can benefit from this summer internship. This meeting is a chance for both students to improve the summer collaborative experience.

The final meeting is a review of the overall work performed during the summer. If there is unfinished work, such as an independent project for the undergraduate, then use this meeting to create a schedule of deadlines to complete the work. If the undergraduate is a local student, then this meeting is an appropriate time to discuss a continued relationship during the academic year, such as post-processing of samples. Most importantly, this meeting is used to continue any discussions from the second meeting. Graduates should tell undergraduates what skills need further development and what they did well. Undergraduates should tell graduates what was unexpected and should be clarified next summer or how the graduate student could improve their management skills.

Most important aspect of internships

Communication and respect are required for a successful collaboration. If graduates and undergraduates follow the recommendations above, both students should have a successful summer. During the summer, it is important for graduates to remember their first internship. We are all beginners at some point and graduates should be positive and supportive. Fieldwork is extremely difficult and not a job enjoyed by everyone. The first field experience is often an attempt by undergraduates to test the waters of possible careers and to learn new skills. It is very important for graduates to keep these points in mind and help mentor the student. Similarly, undergraduates should put 100% effort into their summer job, even if the student decides this job is not their dream career. Wildlife research, and biology in general, is a very small community. Graduate students likely know professionals in other career tracts and can help the undergraduate make new connections. Whether or not you follow the supervisory technique outlined above, maintaining communication between you and your undergraduate employee will create a productive and educational summer experience for you both.

Undergraduate Perspective: Tips for being an effective employee- Hannah Moore

Internships at any point in your undergraduate career shape your career choices for the rest of your life. The best advice I received from a graduate student was “you are not meant to love every internship, but instead to learn from each one and take away pieces that help you decide what direction your career goals are going.” The purpose of an internship is to learn: learn new skills pertaining to your major, learn what supervisory and mentoring skills you work well with, learn what career you want to pursue, and most importantly learn how to handle large responsibilities while working independently. (Continued on Page 6)
How to work well together

Communicate. The single most important factor of a working relationship is to communicate. If time allows, plan for a short meeting to go over progress twice a week, but once a month make that meeting more extensive. This gives both parties the opportunity to discuss what is working and what is not working. Make sure those meetings are effective. You can discuss the bobcat you saw crossing the road at another time. At your formal meetings, however, you need to talk work. The worst meetings I have attended involved 10 minutes of talking business, 40 minutes of being off-topic, and 30 minutes of trying to get everyone back on topic. That is completely ineffective, and frankly a waste of everyone’s vital time. Have an agenda sent out a few days in advance for every meeting; therefore everyone has an opportunity to gather the information that needs to be discussed.

For undergraduates, ask questions. While in the field or in the lab you will encounter roadblocks and need to problem solve to get around them. Your supervisor will not always be there to help, but make sure you discuss the issue and your resolution with your supervisor after the incident. The worse thing a graduate student could discover is that you have performed something incorrect throughout your entire internship because you made an assumption and did not ask a simple question. Always remember, “the only stupid question is the one you don’t ask.”

Respect. Both the undergraduate student and graduate student need to respect one another. The undergraduate is the subordinate so do what is asked of you but also respectfully voice your opinion. Remember that this is the graduate student’s project with which you are assisting. You need to respect their decisions concerning the project. Graduate students, however, also need to respect the undergraduate working with them. The undergraduate is still learning, so treat them like that.

Take home points

Respect and communication are the most important aspects of a successful internship. Graduate students need to remember what that first internship was like for them, and help guide the undergraduate. Both parties need to put 100% into the project for a successful internship. As an undergraduate, work hard. After a week with an internship you may realize that it is not in line with your career goals, and that is okay. However, show up to work and perform the best work possible. Despite your enjoyment of the project, you need that potential recommendation. At the end of the summer do not be afraid to tell your graduate supervisor your opinion. The project may have made you realize you hate working with owls, but love bats. Talk to your graduate student about that, they may know a connection and, depending on the integrity of your work, they may share that connection with you. Regardless, keep in touch with your graduate student. At least once a year send a simple follow-up email to maintain that relationship. I typically ask how their project is going and briefly tell them about my progress. One simple email once a year will make you memorable. If you need that letter of recommendation in 5 years, then you need them to remember who you are 5 years later. Discuss your graduate student’s research progress and support them as they move forward with their career. It could land you a potential job in the future.

The people you work with can make or break a field season. Having a positive attitude, being respectful of authority figures, and striving to do your best is the key to being a successful undergraduate technician. For graduate students hiring the right person for the position, showing appreciation for their hard work and willingness to learn will bring you more success with your technician than you could imagine. Open communication about project priorities, the responsibilities of both parties, and potential future collaboration will be invaluable for both graduate and undergraduate students as you work together this summer. We hope this article has given both students much to think about and can be a source of guidance for those new to this experience.
The New Mexico-Puerto Rico Natural Resources Career Tracks Program

*Dominique Lujan*—New Mexico State University

With an increase in efforts to diversify the work place there seems to be a rise in the amount of programs encouraging minorities to join in natural resources career paths. One such program is the New Mexico-Puerto Rico Natural Resources Career Tracks (NRCT) program. Established in 2012, the NRCT is a collaboration between 12 Hispanic Serving Institutions in New Mexico and Puerto Rico and the USDA Forest Service. The primary objective of the NRCT is to diversify the USDA Forest Service labor force, however since the establishment of the program they have since branched out to other federal agencies. The NRCT program has a list of goals for the student involved to achieve. Through the program both undergraduate and graduate students have the opportunity to acquire paid internships, paid semester lab mentorships, professional and academic advising, expense paid field courses, professional networking, and the opportunity to participate in various workshops and seminars. Being involved in this program, students also have the chance to do a semester or internship exchange between New Mexico and Puerto Rico. There has been a new development in branching out to local high schools to inform students about natural resources careers and opportunities to join the NRCT program.

While being involved in the program Arthur Anya, a senior at New Mexico State University, had this to say, “My experience thus far, in the Natural Resources Career Track (NRCT) program has been exceptional. Not only has the NRCT program given me professional guidance, but has also provided me countless opportunities for growth both professionally and personally.” Arthur was not the only student to say positive things about their involvement in NRCT.
Isidro Barela, also a senior at New Mexico State University, acknowledged the NRCT program when talking about his skill set when he said, “Along with my studies, the NRCT program has definitely aided me in my academic career and has helped prepare me to become a successful future wildlife biologist. The NRCT program has presented me with invaluable opportunities that have helped me gain the skill set I have today… I am fortunate to be a part of an amazing program that has supported me throughout my undergraduate career and without a doubt influenced me to pursue every experience opportunity I can. With the skills I have accumulated with the assistance of NRCT I plan do my part in managing our wildlife and natural resources.” When talking to the other students involved with the NRCT program you can bet that these are not the only two who have great things to say.

Programs like this are invaluable to the students that receive the necessary help that these programs are designed to give. The continuation of programs like this can be beneficial to not only the students and mentors involved, but to the natural resources field as a whole.
Student Leaders Breakfast: Suggestions for a Successful Student Chapter

The SDWG hosted and organized a breakfast for student chapter officers on October 28, 2014 at the annual conference. The young leaders came together and formed a list of suggestions for successful events and strategies student chapters can employ. As a continuation from our last issue of the Student Chronicles we have highlighted a few more suggestions from multiple categories that were identified as important for student chapters.

Suggestions for events and volunteer opportunities

*Wildlife*  
1. Managing urban deer project (collaring & monitoring)  
2. Involvement in spring snow goose festival  
3. Banding owls  

*Meetings and Education*  
1. Weekly guest speakers: both professionals & students  
2. After guest speaker topic, host workshop to reinforce that skill set  
3. Trip to graduate school in region to meet and greet as well as learn about research

Suggestions on increasing involvement

1) Encourage members to be involved in other clubs/organizations on or off campus
2) Host meeting every other week: allows for more flexible schedule
3) Pay for freshman to do wildlife field trip to increase retention

Suggestions on raising funds

1. JAM sales  
2. Conducting raffle & selling tickets to raise money  
3. Daily coffee sales on campus  
4. STEM scholarships

(left) Mule Deer, Reno, Nevada (Photo credit: Levi Heffelfinger). (right) Curve-billed Thrasher, Tucson, AZ (Photo credit: Jen Merems).
Uncertainty of an Undergrad: Navigating the Maze of Employment and Career Opportunities Discussion Panel

During the Student Discussion Panel: Uncertainty of an Undergrad, 5 individuals employed in a variety of wildlife-related jobs engaged in a question and answer session with undergraduate students. In a continuation from our last issue of the Student Chronicles, we have highlighted some more of the advice from the panelists as well as question and answers from the student participants.

- Diversify! Try to get a wide variety of experiences; you never know what skills you will need later. Even the jobs that seem unrelated may be beneficial (example: experience with both game and non-game species)
- Persistence! Do whatever you can to get the job. If you are frustrated, keep trying and don’t give up. Can take 2 to 3 years to find job. Don’t get down on yourself.
- Pick good references! It only takes one of them to give a bad reference when applying for a job.

Q. I don’t have a lot of field experience, what should I do?

A. Graduate students – they generally have a lot of work that needs to be done and don’t have a lot of funding to hire technicians. You can volunteer with them or work for a small stipend. They can also be great references later.

A. Student chapters – they generally have lots of volunteer events you can participate in.

Q. I am interested in research. Should I go straight into graduate school or take time off?

A. If you are really interested, you should have worked with a graduate student while in undergrad to see if this is really of interest. Play all of your options. You may get rejected from graduate school so apply for seasonal jobs as well.
The 22nd Annual Conference
When: October 17-21, 2015
Where: Winnipeg, Manitoba at the RBC Convention Centre
Conference Website

What to look forward to from the Student Development Working Group:
We are hosting a myriad of events at this year’s conference. Make sure to plan out your conference activities so you can attend as many student related events as possible!

Workshop: Behind the Scenes of Scientific Publication and Review 4.0
Leadership Event: Student Chapter Leaders’ Breakfast
Discussion Panel: Uncertainty of an Undergrad: Navigating the maze of employment and career opportunities

Tips for Traveling to Winnipeg: How to get a passport
In order to travel to Canada as a U.S. citizen, you will need a passport. If you have never gotten a passport before or need to renew your old one, the U.S. Department of State has a website with instructions. This website is user-friendly that goes through all the necessary steps for you to acquire your passport in time for our annual conference. Make sure you follow the steps correctly and do not be afraid to ask others for help.