



THE WILDLIFE SAMPLER

Newsletter of The New England Chapter
of The Wildlife Society
Fall 2017

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

CT Conference on Natural Resources

The University of Connecticut will host the 12th annual Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources mid-March at the Storrs campus. The CCNR is a multidisciplinary conference bringing together individuals working with natural resource and environmental management in Connecticut to share research, information, and ideas. Check the CCNR website for 2018 conference updates and information: <https://ccnr2016.weebly.com/>

83rd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

The Wildlife Management Institute will host its 83rd conference March 26-30 in Norfolk, VA. Four special sessions will be held: Conservation Built to Last: Advancing Engagement, Inclusion and Shared Purpose to Address the Challenges of the Future; The Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy: A Model for Collaborative Conservation; The Chicken or the Egg: Broader Support or Broader Significance; and Fish and Wildlife Conservation in the 21st Century: How Poaching, Trafficking, and Illegal Trade are Endangering the North American Model for Wildlife Management. For more information please visit the conference page: <https://wildlifemanagement.institute/conference>

74th Annual Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Conference

The NEAFWA annual conference will be held April 15-18 in Burlington, VT. The conference attracts over 500 natural resources professionals in the fields of wildlife biology, fisheries and fisheries management, information and education and law enforcement. The event provides opportunities for education, discussion, and exchanging of ideas. Highlights include: over 50 workshop sessions, keynote speakers, poster displays, and social networking events. For more information please visit the NEAFWA annual conference page: <http://www.neafwa.org/>

TWS NATIONAL UPDATE

I appreciate the opportunity to share a few updates with the New England Chapter. Hopefully some of you were able to attend our 24th annual conference in Albuquerque in September. As usual, we had an array of excellent sessions each day, inspiring keynote addresses, and opportunities to present all of our awards. Attendance was around 1,830 in the top six conferences in terms of attendees. Next year, our 25th annual conference will be in Cleveland and I am fortunate to be able to set the theme, Recognizing and Sustaining Conservation Success. Just in the 25 years of these conferences, we as a profession have made real progress in restoring wildlife and their habitats across North America and other parts of the world. Often, when we get together, it is to present and discuss problems and challenges to wildlife conservation, and we still have no shortage of those. But, we should also be mindful of and appreciate the successes we have achieved, which have involved creating partnerships, doing research and monitoring to provide information and test alternative management strategies, and working to engage the public to sustain that progress. I am already excited about some of the potential speakers and sessions and am looking forward to working with a lot of people to pull it all together.

Over the last year, The Wildlife Society has implemented a few member benefits, the most significant being providing all members electronic access to all TWS journals as part of their member dues. We did this without raising dues and negotiated this change with our publisher in the first year of our seven year contract. Obviously, it is a cost to TWS, but one we could absorb and one that we hope may lead to increasing membership and higher retention of existing members. The Council thought this was a move worth pursuing to allow all members access to our science without the additional burden of a subscription fee and I certainly hope you agree it was a good move and will share that information with potential members. You may have also noticed we increased the frequency of The Wildlife Professional, from four

issues per year to six. We also have implemented a new Member Center and Directory on TWS' website, improvements which were long overdue and make searching for other members much easier and user-friendly. Another new option has been the Give Back program, where when a member renews their membership they can nominate someone else to receive a 6-month, full membership trial, at no cost to either party. We are hoping that if wildlifera have half a year of access to all the member benefits (the journals, TWP, the weekly e-newsletters, etc.) they will see the value in becoming a dues-paying member on their own. When we started the program, it was not available to student members to nominate other students, but Council voted in September to also allow student members to nominate someone to receive a 6-month student membership, in response to request from student members. It is still too early to tell if the Give Back program will attract a significant number of new members, but I encourage you to think of someone who might be interested in what TWS does and nominate them to accept the 6-month membership when you renew your membership.

As you all know, TWS maintains an active policy program and maintains many partnerships with other conservation organizations and government agencies. These partnerships have been a priority in recent years and will remain so, and we work together to submit joint letters to various Congressional committees, Executive agencies, and state agencies on a wide range of topics. TWS is also in the process of revising a number of our position statements; these typically expire after 5 years unless renewed, a number were due to expire in October and are in the process of revision and renewal, so please look for those soon. Finally, one of my priorities is to raise our profile as a profession with the broader society. My vision is for TWS to be more proactive in using all kinds of media to promote the science in our journals, our policy positions, and the work of our members. If you are on any of the major social media platforms, look for us, follow TWS, share our posts, tweets, and photos, and help us profile work that is important to you. We already have tens of thousands of followers on each of our platforms and I am hoping we can get all of those people to raise the awareness of our profession amongst their friends, biologists or not, as the stuff we all do is really interesting to most of society. We've even created a @TWSPresident Twitter account where I will try to do my part in promoting what all of you do and the issues important to us. Please follow if you are on Twitter and share our website, wildlife.org, with people who have an interest in conservation and wildlife. Please be in touch with me

at twsmdonald@gmail.com if you have ideas, questions, or concerns.

John McDonald, President, The Wildlife Society

STATE REPORTS

Connecticut

CT National Archery in the Schools Program

DEEP re-introduced this program with much success. The in-school program is designed to teach International-style target archery skills with the help of pre-written curriculum that meets physical education standards. Interested teachers attend a one-day Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) training class to become certified before presenting the NASP curriculum to their students. http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2700&q=587670&deepNav_GID=1633

Increase in Harvest of White-Tailed Deer

With a mild winter last year and data from the DEEP fall mast survey indicating fewer acorns than the previous year, harvest was expected to increase. The total deer harvest was 10,661 deer in fall 2016 compared 9,113 deer in 2015. The extended January season that occurs in two deer management zones was up 26% (197 in January 2017 compared to 156 in January 2016). Although not as high as last year, acorn abundance these past two years has been record setting, an unfortunate outcome for many hunters since deer don't have to travel as much to find food. http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/hunting_trapping/pdf_files/ReportedHarvest.pdf

Dr. Drew Lanham spoke at CCNR

The 2017 Connecticut Conference of Natural Resources opened with a 'wildlifer' as the plenary speaker. Dr. Drew Lanham shared with us a new perspective on a land ethic. Check out his book. <https://milkweed.org/book/the-home-place>

New Slideshows about Wildlife and Habitat

DEEP Wildlife Division has recently posted three informative slideshows developed for the public. Endangered species: http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/wildlife/pdf_files/outreach/EndangeredSpecies.pdf

Osprey Nation

Osprey Nation is a citizen science monitoring program organized in 2014 by the Connecticut Audubon Society. The goal of Osprey Nation is to engage citizen scientists in collecting important data on the activity of Osprey nests, particularly the

number of active nests and the number of young that successfully fledge. We now have over 200 volunteer monitors involved with the program who collect data on hundreds of nests. www.ctaudubon.org/osprey-nation



Photo Credit: Phil Maddalena

History of Change for CT's Wildlife: http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/wildlife/pdf_files/0/utreach/HabitatHistory.pdf

Bring Wildlife to Your Yard with Native Plants: http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/wildlife/pdf_files/0/utreach/nativelandscaping_small.pdf

DEEP Wildlife Projects

Several new research and monitoring initiatives are well underway in Connecticut:

A clapper rail study had a successful year, monitoring 53 nests and equipping 18 adults with nanotags.

GPS collars are going out on white-tailed deer as part of a project designed to assess the state-wide aerial population estimates.

The 2nd CT Bird Atlas Project is scheduled to begin in spring 2018.

A three-year study is underway to evaluate experiences with and attitudes towards black bears among Connecticut residents and other associated stakeholders.

A new bobcat project is beginning in fall 2017 and includes a large citizen science component for reporting sightings and road-killed animals.

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/ct-bobcat-project>

Wildlife Highlights E-newsletter

DEEP Wildlife Division launched its new mobile-friendly electronic newsletter in October. "Wildlife Highlights" contains articles on general wildlife topics, wildlife watching, hunting/hunter safety, current events, etc. To sign up, go to www.ct.gov/deep/WildlifeHighlights.

Tracy Rittenhouse, CT Representative to the Executive Committee

Massachusetts

MassWildlife and NWTF Partner to Improve Wildlife Habitat

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) recently partnered with the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) on a wildlife habitat improvement project on MassWildlife's Moose Brook Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Barre, MA. The Massachusetts Chapter of the NWTF financed the habitat management work and MassWildlife provided the technical planning and oversight. The project involved clearing trees and shrubs and removing invasive plants on an overgrown 3-acre parcel at Moose Brook. The open habitat created by this clearing expands the footprint of existing open habitat on the property and benefits a variety of wildlife, including the Wild Turkey for which the NWTF is named. Visitors to Moose Brook WMA will also benefit from a new parking area off of Sheldon Road, providing enhanced access to that portion of the WMA. Like all Wildlife Management Areas, Moose Brook WMA is open to the public for wildlife-related recreation, including hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing. This 922-acre property is a popular destination for outdoor recreation, with brook trout fishing in Moose Brook, and hunting opportunities for game species like white-tailed deer, black bear, and turkey.

Youth Deer Hunt Preliminary Harvest Report

The 2017 Youth Deer Hunt Day was held on September 30. This unique opportunity allows young hunters to hunt deer with their own permit during a special one-day season that precedes the Commonwealth's regular annual deer hunting seasons. MassWildlife issued 1,225 youth permits and so far, approximately 100 harvested deer have been reported through the online MassFishHunt system. Deer reported at physical check stations will be tallied after the conclusion of the regular deer hunting seasons.

Endangered Turtles Get a Head Start on Life

Last month, 164 Northern Red-bellied Cooter hatchlings were paired with fostering institutions where they will live for the next eight months. These fostering institutions—including schools, museums, and non-profit organizations—are part of MassWildlife's Red-bellied Cooter Headstart Program. The Headstart Program began in 1984 as a way for MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) to help the survival of the species and increase awareness of

endangered species in Massachusetts. This year is tied with 2001 for raising the most baby turtles since the headstarting program's inception 33 years ago.

Northern Red-bellied Cooters are a large freshwater turtle listed as endangered both through the Federal Endangered Species Act and the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. Since NHESP began the Headstart Program in 1984, over 4,000 headstarted cooters have been released back into the wild. Many of these released headstarted turtles have grown up and are now laying their own clutches of eggs.

MassWildlife biologists recently completed a four year study in collaboration with the USFWS and UMASS Amherst to assess the current state of the population. The study found a ten-fold increase from a starting population of approximately 200 turtles in two locations, to nearly a dozen locations and 2000 turtles in the state.

Quabbin Timber Rattlesnake Project Suspended

The controversial project intended to establish a new population of Timber Rattlesnakes in the state has been indefinitely suspended. The site for the project is an isolated island inaccessible to humans in the Quabbin Reservoir. The NE TWS Chapter sent a letter of support for the project. However, the project was met with backlash from the public who, during a number of public hearings, expressed fear that the population would somehow escape the island and begin negatively impacting local human communities. Until the issues can be resolved and the public better educated, MassWildlife will continue its rattler headstarting program in cooperation with the Roger Williams Zoo. This successful project has been supplementing existing populations of the endangered indigenous snake in Massachusetts, and we know of two recent females placed in the wild from the headstart project that were pregnant when last checked.

Annual Meeting of the NE Habitat Technical Committee Successful

Participants from thirteen states attended in a three day meeting of the Northeast Habitat Technical Committee this past September at the MassWildlife FHQ in Westborough. The group gathered to discuss habitat management, Farm Bill implications, young forest community work, prescribed burning, along with other pertinent topics. Attendees networked with regional colleagues to share information and explore opportunities to collaborate with their neighbors. The event also served as a meeting space for the Gamebird and Wildlife Diversity sub committees.

Spadefoot Toad Project Work Ongoing

This past summer found MassWildlife staff creating a breeding pool site in the lower CT Valley area of the state in support of a small population of Spadefoot toads there. Habitat restoration work was completed on a small plot in an urban area near Boston where the toad persists, as well as projects on the Cape where the species is most prevalent.

Preliminary Bear Harvest Report for September Season

For the September bear hunting season, licensed bear hunters reported a harvest of 148 bears; 59 reported as female, 86 as male, 3 unknown. This is down from the 190 taken during the September season in 2016.

Black Bear Workshop for First Responders

MassWildlife Black Bear Project Leader Dave Wattles recently conducted a workshop for all police departments along the I-495 corridor regarding the proper response to bear calls. As the bear population continues to expand eastward we are seeing an increase in calls from this area of the state. This workshop was conceived to get ahead of the issue by educating the local law enforcement community in this region as they are often this first contact citizens make when reporting a bear in the area. Officers were given guidance on how to handle bear encounters.

Black Bear Survey

MassWildlife has contracted Responsive Management to conduct a statewide survey regarding the public perception of Black Bears in Massachusetts. We would expect to see significant differences from west to east based on the fact that populations are long established in the western part of the state and people are accustomed to living with bears, versus the eastern part of the state where their presence in numbers is a more recent occurrence.

Former USFWS Salmon Hatchery Converted to Mussel Research Station

The former USFWS salmon hatchery in Sunderland, MA has been converted into a fresh water mussel research station. The facility will also be used to headstart mussels to be released into state waterways, and to study the effects of dam removal on habitat and populations of fresh water mussel species.

Whippoorwill Tracking Project

MassWildlife Ornithologist Andrew Vitz led a project to capture and tag Whippoorwills at two locations in Massachusetts, one in the central part of the state and one location on Cape Cod. A total of 25 tags

were deployed; these GPS devices will collect location data for 12-18 months before failing, and the birds must be re-captured to retrieve the data. We are hopeful of a 25% recapture rate next spring.

Todd Olanyk, MA Representative to the Executive Committee

New Hampshire

The New England Chapter of the Wildlife Society is currently filling the NH Representative to the Executive Committee position. No report available.

Rhode Island

No report submitted.

Chase Bernier, RI Representative to the Executive Committee

Vermont

Two Vermont WMAs Recently Expanded

A land donation has expanded the Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area in Addison, VT, one of Vermont's premiere wildlife hotspots, according to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. The donation by Dubois Farm Inc. of Addison will expand the property by 37 acres, to bring the property to a total of 2,895 acres.

Wildlife management areas are conserved lands throughout Vermont that are owned by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and are managed for fish and wildlife habitat and wildlife-based recreational access. Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area hosts 200 bird species, and is among the most popular destinations in Vermont for bird-watchers and waterfowl hunters. "We are grateful to the Dubois Farm for donating this land," said Louis Porter, commissioner of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. "Their generosity contributes to a growing legacy of conservation that will last for generations."

The new parcel hosts rare and ecologically important clayplain forest. These forests contain oak and hickory trees that attract turkeys, gray squirrels, and deer, making them popular destinations for hunters. Because the forest is adjacent to wetlands, it is particularly important for amphibians such as frogs, toads, and salamanders.

"Birdwatchers and hunters have coveted access to this property for many years," said Porter. "The diversity of bird species found in this forest is incredible for bird enthusiasts. Previous owners closed the land to the public to conduct private

turkey hunts. Now, any hunter may now access the land to try their luck at calling in a turkey." In addition to the land expansion of the Dead Creek WMA, a new visitor center opened in September. "Dead Creek is a very popular destination for wildlife enthusiasts, and the new visitor center will provide a helpful educational resource on everything from the geologic history of the Champlain Valley to the unique ecology and breadth of species found here," said Amy Alfieri, manager of the Dead Creek WMA and visitor center. "Visitors will have a place where they can ask questions and interact with experts on a regular basis."

The Gale Meadows Wildlife Management Area also recently expanded by nearly 200 acres when the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department bought forestland in Winhall and Jamaica and conserved it with the Vermont Land Trust. Now, with the added land, both wildlife and the public can enjoy over 900 acres of permanently conserved land. The Fish & Wildlife Department worked with landowners Mike and Joan Dritz, who sold the property to the state. "This land includes a magnificent wetland, gorgeous trees, rolling hills and beautiful views," said Mike Dritz. "It has been this way for centuries and needs to stay preserved for all to enjoy. We know this will remain a treasure for Vermont and Vermonters." The land also contains more than 100 acres that serve as wintering habitat for deer. "The health and abundance of wildlife depends on having good habitat," said Louis Porter, commissioner of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. "Protecting connected habitat as we did here is essential for large mammals like bear and moose that must travel distances to eat and breed." Funding for the purchase of the land came from sales of state Waterfowl Stamps as well as the newly-created Vermont Habitat Stamp program, and grants from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Vermont Hunters Had Successful 2016 Deer, Turkey, Bear, and Moose Seasons

Deer: Hunters harvested a total of 16,220 deer during Vermont's 2016 deer hunting seasons. The harvest was 27% more than 2015 (12,747), and the total buck harvest of 9,995 was 20% more than the 2015 buck harvest (8,330) and 19% higher than the previous 3-year average (8,372 bucks).

Archers harvested a total of 3,468 deer, which is essentially unchanged from the 2015 harvest of 3,397 deer. Youth hunters harvested a total of 1,436 deer compared to 1,278 deer harvested in 2015. Hunters harvested 7,753 antlered bucks during the 16-day rifle season, up from 6,628

antlered deer in 2015. Finally, muzzleloader hunter harvest was also up from 1,444 deer in 2015 to 3,563 deer in 2016. “The increased harvest was primarily due to the exceptionally mild winter of 2015 which allowed more deer to survive. Additionally, the department issued nearly twice as many muzzleloader antlerless deer permits this year to provide more harvest opportunity and to limit population growth in some parts of the state.” The primary goal of Vermont’s deer management strategy is to keep the deer herd stable, healthy and in balance with available habitat. “Maintaining an appropriate number of deer on the landscape ensures deer and the habitats that support them remain in good condition and productive,” said Nick Fortin, Vermont’s Deer Program Leader. “This year’s harvest clearly demonstrates how productive our deer herd can be.”

Turkey: Vermont turkey hunters had successful spring and fall hunting seasons in 2016, harvesting 7,929 turkeys during Vermont’s three turkey hunting seasons – the spring youth hunt, the regular May spring season, and the fall turkey hunt. Young turkey hunters mentored by experienced hunters took 662 bearded turkeys, which are almost always males, during the youth turkey hunt on the weekend before the regular spring season. Hunters took 4,875 bearded turkeys in the May 1-31 regular spring turkey season. Fall turkey hunting during October and November produced 1,272 turkeys of either sex which was higher than last year’s harvest.

“This year’s total was the closest we’ve come to the record turkey harvest of 6,970 in 2013, said wild turkey project leader Amy Alfieri. “A mild winter and normal reproduction over the past couple years contributed to the healthy 2016 harvest.”

Vermont’s wild turkey population is estimated at 45,000 to 60,000 birds.

Bear: Black bear hunters harvested 697 black bears during the 81 days of the two-part early and late bear seasons. This is higher than the past 10-year average of 520 bears being taken, but it is consistent with the goal of stabilizing the bear population to within 4,500 to 6,000 bears, according to Fish & Wildlife Department bear biologist Forrest Hammond.

Hunters harvested 547 bears (79%) in the early season and only 150 in the late bear season, which overlaps with the November deer season. In the previous year, hunters took nearly equal numbers of bears in the early and late seasons.

Hammond noted that participation in the early bear season has remained high with large numbers of hunters choosing to purchase a \$5 early season bear tag. “Between an abundant population, a long hunting season and the potential of harvesting

delicious and nutritious bear meat, Vermonters and visitors are becoming increasingly interested in hunting this big game animal,” said Hammond.

Moose: Moose hunters in Vermont took 72 moose in this year’s regulated hunting seasons. Nine were taken during the seven-day archery-only season. The success rate was 33%, up from 24% in 2015, but slightly below the previous five seasons combined (35%). A total of 63 moose were taken during the six-day regular season. The success rate was 45%, down slightly from 47% in 2015. Permits were issued for bulls-only in most of the 16 Wildlife Management Units open to moose hunting with a goal of increasing population growth. Only in northern Vermont were hunters able to take moose of either sex.

More information can be found in the 2016 harvest reports on Vermont Fish & Wildlife’s website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com). Results for the 2017 seasons should be available later in early 2018.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Initiates Moose Study

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is initiating a multi-year study to better understand the state’s moose herd. Moose across the Northeast are increasingly under stress from a parasite known as winter ticks. The ticks are becoming more prolific as spring and fall weather has warmed in recent years, causing some moose to collapse from blood loss or die from hypothermia after rubbing their insulating hair off in an attempt to rid themselves of the parasite.

Beginning in January 2018, researchers with the Fish & Wildlife Department will start placing radio-collars on up to 60 wild moose to follow their movements and determine causes of mortality. Moose will be captured by expert wildlife capture contractors using nets from helicopters via well-established techniques that minimize stress and harm to the animal. Department staff will then track these moose for several years using the GPS points gathered by the collars, and by visiting moose directly in the field to record observations. Vermont is the fourth northeastern state to partake in such a study – state fish and wildlife agencies in New Hampshire, Maine, and New York are currently using the same methods to examine their moose herds.

Biologists hope to better understand whether Vermont’s moose calves are surviving to adulthood. They want to know what is causing the death of any moose that die during the study period, including those that are killed by predators such as coyotes or bears, and those that die from brainworm infections or stress caused by winter tick parasites. Biologists will also examine whether

female moose are successfully reproducing and where their young go after they leave their mother's side.

"Moose face a variety of potential threats in the northeast, from warmer temperatures to dramatically increased parasite loads and habitat fragmentation," said Cedric Alexander, Vermont Fish & Wildlife's lead moose biologist. "It is important that we understand how much these factors are affecting our moose population in Vermont. Our moose conservation efforts must be based on a strong foundation of science if we are to understand and address these threats in the long term."

Vermont's moose herd has decreased from an estimated high of over 5,000 individuals in the state in the early 2000s to roughly 2,200 today. The majority of the reduction in the number of moose was a deliberate effort by biologists to bring the herd into better balance with available habitat at a time they were considered overabundant. A single moose can eat over 25 pounds of food a day and their browsing was damaging forest ecosystems, harming not only their own habitat but habitats for many other animals.

According to Alexander, this deliberate reduction in the herd through hunting may have also helped Vermont's moose stave off the worst effects of winter ticks as they have increasingly become a problem in recent years. "Winter ticks spread more rapidly when moose are overabundant," said Alexander. "Although we decreased Vermont's moose herd to reduce the impacts of moose on the landscape, it may have also contributed to the much lower rates of winter ticks on Vermont's moose than biologists observe on moose in New Hampshire or Maine."

The study will run through 2019. For more information, go to www.vtfishandwildlife.com

Lynx Spotted in Southern Vermont

A lone Canada lynx was photographed in the southern Vermont town of Londonderry in June 2017, marking the first confirmed evidence of lynx in Vermont outside the Northeast Kingdom in decades. Lynx are listed as 'threatened' under the federal Endangered Species Act and 'endangered' in the state of Vermont.

The lynx was photographed in the back yard of a rural Londonderry home. Biologists with the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department confirmed the identification of the animal from the photos and visited the site to confirm the location of the photos. Since that time, a wildlife camera photo has emerged that biologists suspect is also of a lynx in nearby Searsburg, Vermont. The photo was taken in May, shortly before the Londonderry sighting. The animal was photographed while passing under

Route 9 using a wildlife underpass created in partnership by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and Vermont Fish & Wildlife. VTrans and Vermont Fish and Wildlife have been setting cameras on potential roadway crossing structures in cooperation with the Staying Connected Initiative to monitor wildlife movements. "This was very exciting news for Vermont," said Chris Bernier, a wildlife biologist for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department who is in charge of lynx conservation. "The fact that this animal chose to travel such a long distance demonstrates why it is vitally important to maintain healthy and well-connected habitat in Vermont. We were thrilled to see the animal using a wildlife underpass that was created for the express purpose of allowing animals to pass safely under the road."

Male lynx are known to disperse long distances, so Bernier believes that there is a strong chance this may be the same lynx in both sightings. Biologists regularly monitor lynx habitat in the area and have not picked up other evidence of the animals locally, indicating that it is unlikely that lynx have established a resident population in southern Vermont. Lynx are strongly tied to large, unbroken forests of spruce and fir trees with high numbers of snowshoe hares, their primary prey species. Forests of this type are mostly found in Vermont in Essex County, and are less common elsewhere in the state.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department actively monitors for lynx in the Nulhegan Basin of Conte National Wildlife Refuge and at the Bill Sladyk and Victory Basin Wildlife Management Areas in partnership with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Plum Creek Timber Co. Survey work in 2016 was unable to detect a resident population anywhere in Vermont despite increased survey efforts.

"Vermont has never had a large or stable lynx population. Records of lynx in Vermont were extremely rare even at the time of the earliest colonists, and have remained infrequent," said Bernier. "We believe lynx may have dispersed into Vermont following a boom in Maine's lynx population in the early 1990s. Maintaining appropriate habitat is vital to ensuring that lynx can exist in this state, even if only as transients."

Vermont Bald Eagles Nest in Record Numbers in 2017

Vermont's bald eagle population continued its recovery in 2017. Twenty-one pairs of adult bald eagles successfully produced 35 young in Vermont in 2017, a modern-day record in the state according to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. The species remains on Vermont's endangered species list, but another strong year of

growth has biologists hopeful for their continued recovery.

Bald eagles typically nest along significant water bodies where fish and other aquatic foods are readily available. In Vermont, most bald eagle nests are found along the Connecticut River, Lake Champlain, Lake Memphremagog, and some other large inland bodies of water.

In 2002, the first Vermont eagle nest was discovered after a 60-year absence. However, it wasn't until 2008 when the first eagle fledgling successfully left its nest. Eagle numbers have been steadily increasing since then, giving hope to their full recovery in the near future.

"Vermont's bald eagles continue to recover thanks to improved habitat conditions, especially water quality and forested shorelines. These conservation efforts would not be successful without the interest and support of the public for these nesting areas by maintaining a respectful distance from the nests," said John Buck, bird biologist for Vermont Fish & Wildlife. "People have reported seeing large numbers of bald eagles migrating through the state, including many juvenile eagles that have remained in Vermont and may someday nest here."

Peregrine falcons successfully raised at least 63 young birds in 2017, according to Audubon Vermont who monitors nesting peregrine falcons in partnership with the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. This is similar to nesting success from previous years, though down slightly from a record high in 2016.

Peregrine falcons and bald eagles declined in the 20th Century nationwide due to loss of habitat, disturbance to nests, and the effects of the pesticide DDT. Laws such as the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and a ban on DDT have aided in the recovery of these birds. Loons similarly faced dramatic declines as a result of shoreline development and human disturbance of their habitat.

In 2005, peregrine falcons, loons, and osprey were removed from Vermont's state endangered species list following years of conservation effort. Bald eagles have recovered in most of the U.S., but remain on Vermont's state endangered species list as they continue to recover locally.

"Vermonters have played a huge role in the recovery of these species," said Margaret Fowle, biologist with Audubon Vermont. "We work with a large number of citizen volunteers who help monitor nests, while the general public has aided in recovery efforts by maintaining a respectful distance from these birds during the critical nesting season. Paddlers have been keeping away from nesting loons, and the climbing community has been helpful by respecting peregrine falcon nesting

cliff closures and getting the word out about where the birds are."

Common terns, another state endangered bird species being monitored by biologists, fledged 71 chicks in 2017. Predation and erratic weather during the hatching period probably accounts for the average nesting result.

Vermont also welcomed 93 newly fledged birds to the state's loon population, breaking the previous record of 81.

Vermont Initiates Study of Threatened Snake Species

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is cooperating in a three-year study of an isolated population of Eastern Ratsnakes, a species that is listed as 'Threatened' under the State's endangered species law.

Researcher Cindy Sprague along with department staff are working with Veterinarian Scott Maclachlan to surgically implant radio transmitters in two ratsnakes. One ratsnake has already been captured and has had the tracking device implanted, with another capture targeted for the summer of 2018. The researchers hope that the snakes will lead the team back to their communal den site, helping to focus future land conservation efforts. The project is being overseen by wildlife biologist Doug Blodgett from the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, as well as Jim Andrews, coordinator of the Vermont Reptile & Amphibian Atlas. "Ratsnakes, as their name implies, eat rats, mice, and other small mammals, and help to control rodent populations," said Blodgett. Rodents cause millions of dollars damage to crops each year nationwide, and are the major carrier of over 60 diseases that are transmissible to humans including Lyme disease, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. "Some people fear snakes, but given the threats that unchecked rodents can pose, people are actually much safer with healthy snake populations around."

According to Blodgett, this northern population of ratsnakes in Addison County is isolated from another Vermont population centered in Rutland County. He says that this study will provide important information for the conservation of this species.

Hydrogeologist Cindy Sprague of Huntington is the principal investigator on this project, and is currently conducting the field tracking portion of the study. She has been studying herpetology for several years and is a long-time volunteer with the Vermont Reptile & Amphibian Atlas. Sprague believes that ratsnakes, like all snake species, are too often misunderstood or vilified. "Ratsnakes are my favorite snake because of their large size and docile nature," said Sprague. "They're not

venomous, eat plenty of rodents and are harmless to humans.”

Jaclyn Comeau, VT Representative to the Executive Committee

2017 CHAPTER WORKSHOPS WELL ATTENDED

The New England Chapter Spring 2017 Workshop was held on Monday, March 13th on the University of Connecticut campus in Storrs, CT. It was held in conjunction with the annual Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources. The topic of the workshop was Wildlife Career Development, tailored toward students and young professionals exploring career tracks in wildlife professions. The morning session featured an interactive discussion panel of wildlife professionals from varying sectors, including state and federal agencies, academia, and private consulting. The afternoon session featured a round-robin social forum for networking and one-on-one discussions with the panel of professionals. The workshop was well attended, at times with standing room only. A special thanks to member Tracy Rittenhouse for assisting to collaborate our event to coincide with the Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources!



2017 Spring Workshop Attendees

The New England Chapter of the Wildlife Society held its Fall 2017 Workshop on Raptor Conservation and Biology at the Norco Sportsman's Club in Princeton, MA on October 24, 2017. The workshop featured four morning presentations on raptors given by: Diane Davis, Book Author and Wildlife Veterinary Technician at the Ecotarium; Thomas French, Ph.D., Assistant Director of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program; Andrew Vitz, Ph.D.,

Massachusetts State Ornithologist; and Paul Roberts, Director of the Hawk Migration Association of North America. Original scheduled afternoon hawk watching at the summit of Mount Wachusett was cancelled due to inclement weather. However, attendees were able to participate in a live bird demonstration provided by Wendy Pavlicek, Falconer with the MA Falconry and Hawk Trust and Director of the Burlington Science Center. Wendy brought live specimens of American kestrel, Harris' hawk, and great-horned owl, and provided an overview of falconry and care for live birds in captivity. The workshop was well attended and received positive feedback. A special thanks to those that volunteered to provide presentations.

For more information on past workshops, please visit the Chapter website: <http://wildlife.org/new-england/about/>

David Cowell, Program Committee

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS February Executive Board Meeting February 15, 2017 MassWildlife Field Headquarters

In attendance:

David Paulson, Susan McCarthy, Ken MacKenzie, Dave Cowell, John McDonald (call in), Tracy Rittenhouse (call in), Chase Bernier (call in)

Agenda

- Treasurer's Report: 2016 Income/Expenses
- Fall Workshop Recap
- Spring Workshop planning
- TWS Field Course Scholarship
- Donations to Envirothon
- I&E Updates
- State Updates
- Northeast Section/National Updates
- Other Business

Treasurer's Report 2016– The Chapter's income from January 1, 2016 through December 2016 totaled \$1,840.00 and consisted of apparel purchases and membership dues paid at the spring and fall workshops and online. Expenses for the year totaled \$1,541.70 and included donations to the MA and NH Envirothon, purchase of a professional recognition plaque for John McDonald, purchase of refreshments for the spring and fall workshops, two scholarships for TWS Field Course participants, and a parting gift for Chapter Vice President Laura Conlee. Petty cash available

for use totals \$137.00 and the TD Bank account balance was \$12,092.54 as of January 19, 2017.

2016 Fall Workshop Recap - Dave Cowell gave a brief recap of the 2016 fall workshop that was held at the USFW region headquarters in Hadley on November 17th. We had a great lineup of speakers who presented on the impacts of climate change on wildlife and their habitats. The workshop was a great success with just under 50 people in attendance many of whom were USFWS personnel who have been working on some of the regional planning groups discussed during the presentations.

2017 Spring Workshop Planning – Most of the executive board meeting was spent discussing plans for the upcoming 2017 spring workshop. During the August e-board meeting, there was a brief discussion of potentially holding the spring workshop at the University of Connecticut where the Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources will be held this year on March 13th. We had previously discussed trying to design a workshop to be held at the conference on GIS modeling. Such a workshop would require much thought and significant input from specialists in order to create a truly beneficial learning experience for attendees. After further discussion of logistical challenges, particularly with less than a month left to plan, we determined that attempting such a workshop would not be in our best interest.

It was also noted that it will be necessary to have our annual business meeting at the spring workshop and we need to ensure that officer elections take place. Currently, there are two officer vacancies in the Chapter including the Vice President and the New Hampshire state representative positions.

After some brainstorming, we felt that it would be most beneficial to take the conference as an opportunity to recruit new members, as the event is well attended by many natural resource professionals and students (~350 people expected) and is being held in a location (southernmost New England) where we typically do not hold workshops. Tracy updated everyone with information on the conference planning, who typically attends, the \$50 registration fee which includes breakfast, lunch, and coffee breaks, booth fees (\$250 with two free registrations), and the availability of space to hold presentations or workshops. Tracy will be able to reserve a room at the conference for the Chapter to use the entire day at no cost. She also provided us with a link to the website for last year's conference (<http://ccnr2016.weebly.com/oral-presentation->

[grid.html](#)) allowing us to look at the schedule which will essentially be the same this year.

We decided to create a discussion panel where officers will speak to attendees about The Wildlife Society national and regional chapters, the Society's mission, advantages of joining a Chapter, as well as the certification process and its benefits. Speakers will then segue into a discussion of career path options that students and young professionals have to consider. Students and young professionals are often unaware of or overwhelmed by the variety of career choices available to them and could benefit greatly from a discussion that may clarify points of confusion or questions. The panel of professionals should include representatives from academia, a state agency such as CT DEEP or MassWildlife, a federal agency such as USFWS or USDA-APHIS, a NGO such as Audubon or The Nature Conservancy, and private consultants. We suggested that the Chapter cover the \$50 registration for each of these speakers.

It was determined that we will plan to hold the business meeting from about 10:30am to 11:00 am while the conference poster session is taking place. This business meeting will be followed by the panel discussion and a Q&A session until lunch time. In the late afternoon from about 3pm to 4pm, we will have a less formal gathering where students and young professionals can speak one-on-one with professionals and can discuss career options as well as resume, cover letter, and interview tips and suggestions. Prior to the workshop, we will be able to advertise this event using social media to all of the colleges in our area with student chapter of TWS in order to promote attendance.

Dave Cowell will draft a schedule for the workshop and a "save the date" will be designed and emailed/posted as soon as possible.

TWS Field Course Scholarship – John McDonald noted that there are five students from New England Chapter colleges who are enrolled in the field course. These individuals are all potential candidates for the two scholarships the Chapter is able to provide this year. John will provide us with information on these students and we will be sent any cover letters and/or resumes to review from those students interested.

Donations to Envirothon – Dave Paulson noted that the Chapter recently made a \$100 donation to the Rhode Island Envirothon and that we are waiting to hear from other New England Envirothon groups who may request a similar donation. The Chapter typically offers two Envirothon donations

each year and alternates amongst the New England states.

I&E Updates – Ken updated the group on information and education efforts. There are currently 600 members on the Facebook page and the TWS website has recently undergone some updating. Ken now gets information directly from the parent chapter webpage organizers and he updates our chapter page accordingly. Ken made a request for presentations from past workshops so that he can post them to the website. He needs presentations from the fall 2015, spring 2016, and fall 2016 workshops.

State Updates – Chase gave an update for Rhode Island in which he mentioned that the New England cottontail restoration project is on its 4th or 5th year and going well and that all hunting seasons went well this year. Tracy gave an update for Connecticut mentioning that the state is dealing with budget issues. While she doesn't know exactly what those issues are, it will likely have some effect on the wildlife division. She mentioned that New England cottontail monitoring is consuming much staff time this winter, as there are many sites to sample. Tracy also noted that they are in the beginning stages of a new deer study in which they are collaring animals to assess population estimates at the management unit level. Tracy was unable to provide any updates for the non-game sector in Connecticut at this time. Todd Olanyk, the Chapter's Massachusetts representative was not in attendance, so David Paulson and Sue McCarthy gave noteworthy updates. Dave talked about the potential listing of the rusty patched bumble bee, the one confirmed record of the species from Harwich, and the many regulatory challenges (affecting all northeast states and federal agencies) that would come should the species be listed given that it is considered a habitat generalist. Dave also noted that NHESP staff are currently conducting bat hibernaculum surveys and noted that there are several grants available for wood, Blanding's and spotted turtles as well as grant money for rare mussel restoration projects utilizing now unoccupied federal salmon hatcheries. Sue McCarthy spoke briefly about updates in the Wildlife Section. This fall there were record harvests for deer, bear, and turkey. Similar to CT, staff has been quite busy with NEC pellet monitoring and has several sites to sample. The annual hunter survey has recently been deployed and over 4,000 responses have been received thus far.

Northeast/National Updates – John McDonald provided the Northeast and National Chapter updates. He noted that the national chapter is

currently looking for a new executive director and that there are five candidates who will be interviewed in conjunction with the upcoming Council meeting the first weekend in March. John reminded us of our free access to TWS publications with our membership and hopes that we are all taking advantage of that. John noted that when members renew their membership they can offer one free, 6 month sponsored membership (at the national level) to people who may be interested or whose membership has lapsed. He said that at least 75% of those offered the membership thus far (about 350 people) have accepted it. After their free 6 months are up, the candidate is encouraged to continue on as a paying member.

Dave Paulson mentioned his concern regarding the recent non-compliance notice the Chapter received from the President of TWS. Dave explained that the letter attached in the email was very short, vague, and unhelpful in determining what the non-compliance issue was. He also expressed concern over the unnecessarily threatening tone of the email. John said that the National Chapter has received a number of complaints regarding this mass mailing of non-compliance letters to several chapters and that the approach will be discussed at their next council meeting. John requested that we forward him the original email with the attached letter so that he can read the language himself.

John talked briefly about the TWS Field Course saying that it is currently filled at 20 students. He said that there is a good range of graduate (9) and undergraduate (11) students from all over the country and that many of them come from more general biology backgrounds or degrees. John noted that five of the students are from New England Chapter colleges and may be candidates for the two scholarships the Chapter will offer this year. The course fee is still \$950, but Castleton University has raised their tuition price by about \$25 per student.

August Executive Board Meeting August 17, 2017

MassWildlife Field Headquarters

In attendance:

David Paulson, Susan McCarthy, Todd Olanyk, Dave Cowell, John McDonald (call in), Tracy Rittenhouse (call in), Chase Bernier (call in)

Agenda

- Treasurer's Report
- Spring 2017 Workshop Recap
- 2017 Officer Election Results
- Fall 2017 Workshop Planning
- State Updates

- Northeast Section/National Updates
- Other Business

Treasurer's Report– The Chapter's income from January 1, 2017 through August 2017 totaled \$1,180.00, primarily sourced through new memberships and renewals. Expenses to date totaled \$1,100.00, including a donation to the Rhode Island Envirothon, reimbursement for some member registrations to the Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources, and scholarships for TWS Field Course participants. Petty cash available for use totals \$157.06 and the TD Bank account balance was \$11,544.54 as of August 3, 2016.

2017 Spring Workshop Recap - Dave Cowell gave a brief recap of the 2017 spring workshop that was held at UCONN in Storrs, CT on March 13, 2017. The workshop was held in conjunction with the 2017 Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources. A special thanks to Tracy Rittenhouse for aid in coordinating this event. The subject of the workshop was Wildlife Careers, which featured a discussion panel of wildlife professionals from differing sectors, including state and federal agencies, private consulting, and academia. The intent of the workshop was to provide students and young professionals with perspective and understanding of the roles, benefits, and costs of differing professional career tracks within the ecological sciences. The workshop was well attended, at times with standing room only capacity. Thanks to all volunteer panelists and Susan McCarty for moderating the sessions.

2017 Officer Elections – Officer elections were held via online balloting in the spring. The results of the election are as follows:

President – David Paulson
 Vice President – Susan McCarthy
 Secretary/Treasurer – David Cowell
 MA State Rep – Todd Olanyk
 CT State Rep – Tracy Rittenhouse
 VT State Rep – Jackie Comeau
 RI State Rep – Chase Bernier
 NH State Rep – Vacant

There are two (2) qualified candidates with interest in serving as the NH State Representative. The Board discussed how to select one representative without alienating the other. It was suggested to offer another chapter position (such as Program Coordinator or Policy Advocate). The matter was unresolved at the meeting. The Board also received a suggestion that prior to future electoral balloting, each candidate prepare and provide their background and a statement.

2017 Fall Workshop Planning – The Board discussed options for the subject of a Fall 2017 Workshop and agreed to focus on Raptor Conservation and Biology, with intent to host the workshop at Mount Wachusett to coincide with fall hawk migration season. The morning session would include presentations on current raptor research and the afternoon activity would be hawk watching at the summit of Mount Wachusett. The Wachusett DCR Visitor Center and Wachusett Ski Resort were mentioned as potential venues to host the event. Susan McCarthy mentioned that she would contact a falconer to see if they had any interest in participating with a live bird demonstration. Dave Cowell mentioned that he would reach out to Paul Roberts, Director of the Hawk Migration Association of North America, to see if he had any interest in presenting.

State Updates

Connecticut – Tracy updated that CT had a bobcat program in the works, proposed for rollout in the fall with public outreach. A clapper rail study is in its second year, with a component of nanotagging juveniles. A Bird Atlas for CT is in the works, and a legislative push to add bears to huntable species was voted down.

Rhode Island – Chase updated that there was a prescribed burn of 200 acres of land within the Maple Farm Wildlife Habitat Management Area. RI is offering a free deer hunting seminar, youth waterfowl training, and a youth pheasant hunt weekend.

Vermont – Jackie updated that there has been 3 ongoing seasons of telemetry tracking of black bear as it pertains wind farms and habitat use. There is a 3-state venture study on moose populations. The state has been monitoring 50 pairs for peregrine falcons on cliffs and ledges, and a rare species of sedge was identified in Champlain Valley.

Massachusetts – Todd updated that there was an annual meeting of the Technical Committee to discuss habitat management, the Farm Bill, prescribed burning, and site tours of Wildlife Habitat Management Areas. A 4-year study performed by UMASS and USFWS of red-bellied cooters has shown a positive increase in population numbers. The proposal to introduce timber rattlesnakes to the Quabbin Reservoir has been indefinitely suspended, however the head start program at the Roger Williams Zoo continues. There is an effort to create breeding pool habitat for spadefoot toads along the CT River corridor. The Sunderland federal salmon hatchery has been renovated and reopened to serve for research on freshwater muscles. In a habitat survey of wetland birds, state ornithologist Drew Vitz was surprised to find more bittern and less sora and least tern.

There is a workshop for police departments on the I-495 corridor on how to respond to reports of black bear/human contact situations. NHESP has released the 14th edition of their Natural Heritage Atlas.

Northeast/National Updates

John McDonald informed the group that the VT Field Course drew 21 attendees and received good feedback. TWS has named Ed Thompson as the new Executive Director of the Society. John's term as National President formally begins in September. The Society is reviewing new accounting procedure and seeking to hire a new auditor. The Society is also rolling out a new organization chart for all national chapter officers. The Society is also looking to hire a new outreach and professional development person. There is a new website and member account format. All

legacy publications are now available to members online and there are resources for local chapters and approved minutes of council.

Other Business

- The Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation are planning to host their 2018 meeting in Massachusetts
- The Northeastern Transportation and Wildlife Conference will be held at UMASS Amherst from September 8-12 in 2018
- The Northeast Wildlife Trackers Conference will be held to MassWildlife at Field Headquarters in Westborough in September 2017.

WILEY

Read the most talked about papers from The Wildlife Society publications

Altmetrics are metrics and qualitative data that are complementary to traditional, citation-based metrics. They can include (but are not limited to) discussions on research blogs, mainstream media coverage, and mentions on social networks such as Twitter. The **Altmetric Attention Score** for a research output indicates the amount of attention it has received.

Most Talked About Research

Altmetric Score	Research Title	Journal
436	Polar bear attacks on humans: Implications of a changing climate	Wildlife Society Bulletin
334	The true cost of partial fencing: Evaluating strategies to reduce reptile road mortality	Wildlife Society Bulletin
117	How publishing in open access journals threatens science and what we can do about it	Journal of Wildlife Management
89	Investigating impacts of oil and gas development on greater sage-grouse	Journal of Wildlife Management
88	Free-roaming cat interactions with wildlife admitted to a wildlife hospital	Journal of Wildlife Management
87	Demography of an increasing caribou herd with restricted wolf control	Journal of Wildlife Management
78	Evaluating population expansion of black bears using spatial capture-recapture	Journal of Wildlife Management
73	Online hunting forums identify achievement as prominent among multiple satisfactions	Wildlife Society Bulletin
68	Population-level effects of lead fishing tackle on common loons	Journal of Wildlife Management
68	Persistence of greater sage-grouse in agricultural landscapes	Journal of Wildlife Management

*Altmetric score based on current standings as of November 9th 2017

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CHAPTER MERCHANDISE

The New England Chapter of The Wildlife Society has merchandise available for purchase displaying our logo!

To view merchandise available for sale visit the Chapter's webpage:

<http://wildlife.org/new-england/about/merchandise/>

Items are also available for purchase at Chapter meetings and workshops!

The Wildlife Sampler is a biannual newsletter of the New England Chapter of The Wildlife Society that provides up-to-date information on both state (CT, MA, NH, RI, VT) and regional wildlife management programs and conservation issues. The success of this newsletter depends on **your** contributions. Suggestions regarding the content and format of the newsletter are always welcome, as are contributions of news articles, job announcements and meeting notices. Letters and commentaries offered for publication also will be considered. Contributions from student members and members employed by consulting firms, educational institutions, or other environmental organizations are encouraged. Newsletter items should be forwarded to your state representative. Please email documents as attachments in Microsoft Word format. See email addresses above. State representatives must submit newsletter items to the Editor by the deadline to be considered for inclusion in the newsletter.

The New England Chapter of The Wildlife Society is a non-profit scientific and educational organization serving professionals in all areas of wildlife conservation. For more information about the Wildlife Society, please visit the website: <http://wildlife.org/> and the Chapter's page: <http://wildlife.org/new-england/>.

New England Chapter TWS logo created by Paul Rego, CT DEEP Wildlife Division