



THE WILDLIFE SAMPLER

Newsletter of The New England Chapter
of The Wildlife Society
Fall 2015

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

New England Chapter TWS Annual Fall Workshop

Please join the New England Chapter of the Wildlife Society for the annual fall workshop: "Wildlife and Sustainable Energy". The workshop will be held October 15 at the Nashua River Watershed Association in Groton, MA. Please see the President's Message and attached agenda on page 7 for more details.

TWS National Conference

The Wildlife Society's 22nd annual conference will be held at the RBC Convention Center in Winnipeg, Manitoba October 17-21, 2015. New this year with registration is the automatic entry of all participants into a drawing to win one of two trips to The Lodge at Little Duck or Sasaginnigak Lodge. The drawing is being conducted by Travel Manitoba, a Gold Sponsor of our Annual Conference. Please visit <http://www.twsconference.org> for more information.

Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources

The 10th Annual Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources will be held on Monday, March 14th, 2016 at UConn's Storrs campus. This one-day conference brings together professionals focused on forest, fish, soil, water, and wildlife, and thus is a great networking opportunity. We encourage attendance from people working throughout the region. Please see the website for more information
<https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1640180>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fellow Chapter Members,

In a recent edition of the Wildlife Professional (TWS's Magazine), the focus was on renewable energy and how it impacts wildlife. That article coupled with the growing number of renewable energy developments in New England, led the Chapter to make it the topic of our Annual Fall Workshop "Wildlife and Sustainable Energy".

It is safe to assume that many of us are familiar with the impacts that conventional (ex. coal, oil natural gas) energy generation has on our environment (i.e. climate change). That said, even sustainable energy (ex. wind and solar) impacts (both positive and negative) our natural resources (short and long term). Ideally, these developments would occur on roof tops, parking lots, and brown fields; however, in southern New England this is not always true.

The goal of the workshop is to have an open dialogue, develop a better understanding of the requirements necessary for these operations, and look for ways to minimize the negative and maximize the positive effects.

I look forward to seeing everyone on October 15th at the Nashua River Watershed Association. Don't forget to RSVP by October 8, 2015!

Sincerely,
David Paulson

*David Paulson, President
New England Chapter of TWS*



STATE REPORTS

Connecticut

The Migratory Bird Program in the DEEP Wildlife Division is finishing up several large initiatives. The program is in the final year of a four year study to assess effects of saltmarsh restoration on wintering black duck energetics and survival. We are finishing up a three year study to assess effects of clearcutting and other large scale disturbance on nesting success of forest interior birds, and in the process of writing up results of a study on ruffed grouse to assess survival and habitat use. Implementing woodcock management plan with baseline metrics being formalized. Radio telemetry project to assess use and survival in created habitats to begin in spring in same area where baseline data before habitat work was collected.

Encounters between people and bears have been a topic of much conversation in CT this fall. In late August, a hiker at the Session Woods Wildlife Management Area filmed her encounter with a black bear. She reported the encounter to DEEP and also posted the video to facebook. The video went viral and shows typical bear behavior when tracking and testing potential prey. The hiker was not injured. More information can be found in DEEP Press Releases and by searching for articles in local news outlets or listening to the WNPR radio interview with Paul Rego and the hiker. <http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?Q=570060&A=4707>
<http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?Q=570268&A=4707>

Tracy Rittenhouse, CT Representative to the Executive Committee

Massachusetts

Nothing to Report.

Todd Olanyk, MA Representative to the Executive Committee

New Hampshire

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces Decision Not to List the New England Cottontail

On September 11, 2015, a number of conservation partners from throughout New England gathered in Dover, N.H. for an announcement by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe declaring that the New England Cottontail will not be listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The New

England cottontail was classified as a candidate for Endangered Species Act protection beginning in 2006. In 2008, state and federal biologists began a coordinated conservation effort that included the development of a range-wide conservation strategy and set a goal of 13,500 cottontails in healthy young forest landscapes by 2030. The basis for the decision not to list New England cottontails under the Federal ESA was due to a multi-state collaboration that has combined habitat management, captive breeding, and public-private partnerships to advance the conservation of the species.



New England cottontail. Image courtesy of the USFWS.

New Hampshire Extends Moose Research for Additional Two Years

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department has received approval and additional funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and has entered into contract with the University of New Hampshire to extend the current moose research project titled, "Productivity and Mortality of Moose in Northern New Hampshire" for an additional two years. During December 2013 and 2014 moose were captured by aerial darting / net gunning from a helicopter and radio-collared. The goal of this project extension is to capture an additional 40 moose in December 2015 and December 2016. The University will continue to conduct research activities using an additional M.S. graduate student working under Professor Dr. Peter Pekins including: monitoring to determine productivity, cause and rate of mortality, collect nutrition information, and collect weather data to investigate possible relationships between seasonal conditions and tick abundance. No other changes are proposed to the scope of the project or the type of activities conducted.

Partial Ban on Use of Chocolate in Bear Bait

Now in Effect

An important new rule now in effect bans the use of solid chocolate or candy containing chocolate when baiting bear in New Hampshire. In 2016, the use of baked goods containing chocolate will also be prohibited. Under the new rule, no person shall establish, tend, or hunt bear over a bait containing chocolate or any cocoa derivative, except that during the 2015 bear baiting season only, donuts, pastries, or other baked goods containing chocolate or cocoa derivatives may be used as bait. For the 2016 black bear baiting season and for all subsequent black bear baiting seasons, no person shall establish, tend, or hunt over a bait containing chocolate or any cocoa derivative. This rule change was done to prevent the poisoning of bears and other wildlife that may ingest chocolate which contains a chemical called theobromine that can be deadly to wildlife.

NH Fish and Game Names New Chief of Law Enforcement

Kevin J. Jordan was recently promoted to the rank of Colonel and has taken the helm as the new Law Enforcement Division Chief at the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. Jordan has served with the N.H. Fish and Game Department for more than twenty years. In 1994, he was first sworn in as a Conservation Officer with the Department and assigned to the Lancaster area. In 2004, Jordan was promoted to District Lieutenant, and then in 2009, he became the Conservation Officer Captain, assigned to Headquarters in Concord. The following year in 2010, Jordan was promoted to Major and became Fish and Game's Assistant Chief of Law Enforcement. Throughout his career Jordan has demonstrated leadership, professionalism and excellence whether it was through his involvement with the Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV) Program, upholding the Department's ability to perform Snowmobile Sobriety Checkpoints, performing search and rescues, or his daily interactions with sportsmen and women of the state and his peers. We wish him all the best in his new position!



Col. Kevin Jordan was recently promoted to Chief of Law Enforcement of N.H. Fish and Game

Successful Summer for State-Endangered Piping Plovers

It was a successful summer for the state-endangered and federally-threatened piping plover on Hampton and Seabrook Beaches this year. This summer, three pairs nested on Hampton Beach with five chicks fledged (25+ days old). On Seabrook Beach, five pairs of plovers fledged seven chicks, including one on Harborside Beach. Last year, six pairs of plovers nested and fledged only two chicks, and the previous season high was seven nesting pairs. Since protection efforts began in 1997 over 110 piping plover chicks have fledged from NH beaches.



Piping plover on New Hampshire Beach. Photo By Joshua Megyesy.

Allison Keating, NH Representative to the Executive Committee

Rhode Island

No report submitted.

Chase Bernier, RI Representative to the Executive Committee

Vermont

Cooperative Marten Study

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is working in cooperation with Central Connecticut State University and the U.S. Forest Service to better understand the distribution of marten in southern Vermont. Non-invasive camera surveys are being conducted to detect marten in the Manchester District of the Green Mountain National Forest. Surveys began during the winter of 2014 and thus far a total of nine marten have been verified. This data will be used to develop an occupancy model of marten in the region.

Monitoring of Birds

It has been ten years since both peregrine falcons and loons were taken off of Vermont's endangered species list. Both species have experienced population increases in the state and 2015 proved to be another successful nesting seasons. There were 87 nesting loon pairs documented in Vermont this year with a total of 69 surviving chicks. There were 44 cliff nesting pairs of peregrine falcons documented with a record 67 fledged chicks.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department relies on the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Audubon Vermont, and numerous volunteers to assist with monitoring and conservation efforts for loons and peregrine falcons. Efforts to protect nesting habitat and to limit human disturbance during the nesting and chick rearing seasons have been important for the success of these species.

Bald eagles continue to hold steady in Vermont, but have not yet recovered enough to be removed from Vermont's endangered species list. They produced 16 fledglings this summer, lower than the recent record of 26 fledglings in 2013. The lower number of fledglings in 2015 is likely a result of the severe weather experienced during March and early April when most eagles are incubating their eggs. The Fish and Wildlife Department continues to make efforts to identify and protect critical bald eagle habitat in order to help their recovery.

Timber Rattlesnake Conservation

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is working in cooperation with the Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas, the Orianna Society, and the Nature Conservancy to continue efforts to conserve and monitor timber rattlesnakes in Vermont. Recent efforts have focused on monitoring the effects and spread of snake fungal disease. The disease was first discovered among Vermont's rattlesnake population in 2012. It appears as white to brown blisters on the snake's face. While timber rattlesnakes in Vermont have died after contracting snake fungal disease, scientists don't know yet the extent of the threat or whether it will cause the state-endangered populations to decline even further. The disease is also suspected to have infected several other snake species in Vermont, including Eastern ratsnakes and common milksnakes. The disease also exists in timber rattlesnake populations in New Hampshire and Massachusetts and is thought to be causing declines in those populations.

Reducing the Threat of CWD in VT

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board voted to ban the possession and use by hunters of natural lures based on deer urine or other fluids beginning in 2016. By doing so the board hopes to reduce the threat of chronic wasting disease (CWD) entering the state, which has the potential to devastate Vermont's deer herd.

The disease is currently found in 23 states and two Canadian provinces. Ontario, Arizona and some areas of Pennsylvania prohibit the use of such lures. CWD is 100 percent fatal in infected individuals, and infection levels can approach 50 percent in adult bucks.

"The Fish & Wildlife Department fully supports the board in this important step to protect Vermont's deer herd," said Mark Scott, director of wildlife for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. "This rule still allows hunters to use synthetic lures which pose no threat to the herd."

CWD can be spread in deer urine, feces and saliva, and deer may not show symptoms of the disease for several years after being infected. CWD can be deposited in soil and remain infectious for decades. The form of the disease found in sheep has been infectious 18 years after being deposited in soil, according to wildlife veterinarian Dr. Walter

Cottrell. Dr. Cottrell has worked closely with the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department as a contract wildlife veterinarian since retirement as wildlife veterinarian for Pennsylvania. He presented on the science of CWD to the Fish & Wildlife Board at their April 22 meeting.

“Because of its long incubation period of months to years, when this disease arrives in a new place, it can potentially be there for a long time before it is detected,” said Dr. Cottrell. “And once the disease is there the genie is out of the bottle. Based on the experiences of the affected states and provinces it never leaves.”

Dr. Cottrell outlined how quickly the disease can spread among deer populations. In Wyoming, 12 percent of the mule deer population was infected in 1997, while 47 percent of the population is infected today. According to Dr. Cottrell, there currently is no test for CWD on living animals – tests are performed on deer only after they die. Deer are able to contract CWD and spread the disease for up to a year and possibly longer before they demonstrate any clinical signs of the disease. Deer urine lures are not tested for CWD, nor is it possible to track and recall bottles of lure that have been sold from a facility that later tests positive for the disease. Captive deer populations have been implicated in the spread of CWD in several states. While many captive deer facilities claim that their facilities are ‘CWD-free,’ urine lures from different sources are commonly mixed so hunters are unable to tell the origin of their product. The first case of CWD in Pennsylvania was recorded in a captive deer facility that was considered ‘CWD-free’ and was selling deer urine lures online, according to a letter to the board from Dr. Krysten Schuler, a researcher the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.

“Pennsylvania officials have been unable to trace the source of CWD in their captive cervid industry, nor has the source been determined for CWD-positive facilities detected in the last five years in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Iowa, Utah, and Alberta, Canada,” said Dr. Schuler in a letter to Vermont Fish & Wildlife. “Once CWD is established in wild cervids, no state or province has been able to control or eliminate it despite monumental efforts and expense. Therefore,

implementing strong preventative measures is the only tool available to combat this disease.”

Dr. Cottrell agreed, saying that banning natural deer urine lures is one of the few things the board can do to prevent the spread of CWD into Vermont. Dr. Nancy Matthews performed research on CWD in Wisconsin for 13 years before taking on the role of Dean of University of Vermont’s Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. In a letter to the Fish & Wildlife Board, Dr. Matthews also expressed her support for the science behind the ban.

“Based on my personal research and an understanding of the existing scientific literature, I fully endorse the proposed ban,” wrote Dr. Matthews. “Simply put, it is in the best interest of the deer and moose populations in the state.”

One more board vote will follow in the coming months. The proposed ban would become effective in 2016.

Jaclyn Comeau, VT Representative to the Executive Committee

NORTHEAST SECTION UPDATE

No Report Submitted.

John McDonald, Northeast Section Representative

TREASURER’S REPORT

As of August 20, 2015, the Chapter’s account had a balance of \$11,205.24 after depositing member dues from the spring workshop as well as the online membership purchases. Recent expenses included a \$100 donation to the RI Envirothon in February as well as a plaque of recognition and departing gifts for Wayne MacCallum who retired from his position as the Director of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife in April.

The quarterly report for dues paid via the online system for January 1-June 30 was received in mid-July. The New England Chapter membership roster has since been updated to include all online memberships as well as new memberships collected at the spring workshop.

THE NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY CONTACT INFORMATION

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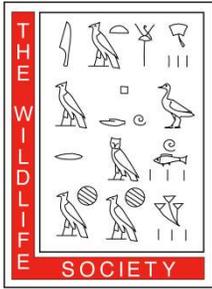
CHAPTER MERCHANDISE

The New England Chapter of The Wildlife Society has many items available for purchase displaying our logo!
To view merchandise available for sale, follow the link on The Chapter's webpage:
<http://www.wildlife.org/newengland/home>. Items will be available for purchase at the Fall Workshop.

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, visit: <http://wildlife.org/> and the Chapter: <http://www.wildlife.org/newengland/home>

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



SAVE THE DATE!

New England Chapter of the Wildlife Society Annual Fall Workshop

Nashua River Watershed Association River Resource Center
592 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450
Thursday, October 15th, 2015
9:30 am – 3:00 pm

Wildlife and Sustainable Energy

Agenda

9:30 – 10:00 am Refreshments and Registration

10:00 – 10:30 am Welcome and Business Meeting

10:30 – 11:55 pm Presentations

10:30 – 10:55 – Wind Development and Bat Populations

Presenter: Zara Dowling, University of Massachusetts PhD. Candidate

11:00 – 11:25 – Massachusetts Rare Species and Solar Arrays

Presenter: Brent Powers, Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

11:30 -11:55 – Impact of Wind Development on Black Bears

Presenter: Jaclyn Comeau, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department

11:55 – 1:00 Break for Lunch

1:00 – 3:00 – Wind and Solar Energy Tour

The Wildlife Society Continuing Education – 3.0 Credits

Registration will occur at the door:

Members (Regular & Student) – Free

Student Nonmembers - \$5.00, which includes membership in the chapter

Regular Nonmembers - \$10.00, which includes membership in the chapter

RSVP BY October 8, 2015

David Paulson david.paulson@state.ma.us