

The Wildlife Society



Ohio Chapter Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2018
Newsletter

President's Message from Geoff Westerfield

This is an exciting time to be a wildlife professional or student in Ohio. Over the next 9 months, there will be 2 huge, close-to-home opportunities for you with the national Wildlife Society conference being held from October 7-11, 2018 and the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference from January 26-30, 2019. Both events are being held in downtown Cleveland. Over the years I have had the opportunity to attend each conference and every time has been a great experience. As a professional it has allowed me to grow my knowledge base by learning what, and maybe more importantly how, other states manage wildlife. I also have the ability to network with other wildlife professionals who have similar professional accountabilities as my own, which can be highly beneficial. I remember once hearing a talk about how North Carolina manages red wolf populations and how that has allowed me to better relate information regarding coyote management to landowners.

As a student, the conferences afford you many opportunities. You can network with future employers throughout the country and even the world while also seeing some of the cool research and management being conducted. As a student, this is a huge opportunity to add to your resume by demonstrating commitment to the profession as an attendee, presenter, volunteer, or a combination of the three. If you are a student chapter member we will even be offering up some great volunteer opportunities for the Wildlife Society conference to further enhance your networking abilities.

As a supervisor that hires, attendance at conferences like these shows me that you are committed to this profession and will be a strong candidate for the job.

Whether you are a student or a professional, the Ohio Chapter of The Wildlife Society board looks forward to seeing you at the upcoming conferences and taking advantage of these high quality events happening right in your backyard.

Officer Call for Treasurer and President-Elect

For terms beginning in January 2019, the Ohio Chapter of The Wildlife Society is soliciting nominations for the positions of Treasurer and President-Elect. Treasurer terms are 2 years and the President-Elect term is also for 2 years before assuming the role of President and then Past-President. As a reminder, all Ohio Chapter officers must be members of the national parent society. Please consider this opportunity for you to engage OCTWS in a more active role. If you wish to nominate yourself or someone else for the office of Treasurer or President-Elect, please forward your nomination to Geoff Westerfield (Geoffrey.Westerfield@dnr.state.oh.us) by August 15th. If insufficient nominations are received by the August 15th deadline, we will re-issue a call for nominations in the early fall.

2018 OWMA Conference Recap

The 58th Ohio Fish and Wildlife Conference occurred January 25-26, 2018. In the line above, if you were paying attention, a resolution was passed to adopt the name Ohio Wildlife Management Association, rendering the past acronym OFWMA obsolete. To launch the activity schedule, OCTWS hosted an indoor workshop entitled “Understanding Human Dimensions while Running Surveys” that ran approximately 4 hours. Speakers from US Department of Agriculture, Ohio State University, Columbus Metro Parks, and Ohio Division of Wildlife covered interesting topics and generated lots of lively discussion. In particular, there was excellent banter exploring shifting tides of the consumptive vs non-consumptive outdoor recreation base and what that means for a host of important and relevant issues.

This year’s meeting continued to build upon last year’s momentum by hosting joint-business meetings over a catered dinner. Harvey Webster, was Thursday evening’s special speaker, and drove down to join us from Cleveland’s Museum of Natural History. His talk entitled “Living with Leopold: the relevance of Aldo Leopold in the 21st century” was both captivating and inspiring – definitely a punctuation point to the evening!

Nearly everyone remained on-site to socialize for several hours afterwards, reconnecting, swapping stories, and engaging the day’s speakers who were able to remain for the duration of

the evening's activities. It was a great event that built on the prior year's initial foray into a Thursday evening agenda and leads us into a third year of planning for a pre-OWMA time for socializing, conference business meeting, and special event and programming.

Friday's agenda was packed full of great topics and excellent speakers. The keynote, Dr. Bryan Richards (USGS), delivered an information-packed presentation on the current state of affairs with chronic wasting disease. Other talks focused on environmental-DNA, acoustic bat surveys, prairie habitat restoration efforts, and even potential wildlife applications of unmanned aerial vehicles, among others.

The annual conference of the Ohio Wildlife Management Association is always a great event and well-attended by professionals and students from across the state. 2018 was no exception. The Ohio Chapter of The Wildlife Society has been proud to partner with making this event a success with the expanded line-up of activities. We look forward to 2019 and can tell you that an exciting agenda is in the works yet again!

Recent Research & Publications

OCTWS members received an email in early spring to send me (karns.36@osu.edu) any recent



Ohio-related research or publications that others in the profession ought to be aware of. I received a couple replies as well as provided a few resources of my own to start this bi-annual feature going into the future. Please shoot me links or PDFs, articles or newsworthy bits for inclusion in the next newsletter ~6 months from now. This is a great opportunity to share information that was useful or interesting to you with others.

From USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, a brand new tri-fold pamphlet is available (provided here in PDF format) that focuses on black vulture damage management in Ohio. The document provides clear and concise information on the various conflicts arising from black vultures and clear directives on how to seek out assistance for mitigating those issues.

Ohio State researchers from the Department of Veterinary Medicine and Department of Anthropology published a 2018 paper entitled “Hunters’ knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards wildlife diseases in Ohio.” In particular, the research explored Ohio hunters’ knowledge related to wildlife-transmitted infectious diseases and evaluated certain behaviors (e.g., wearing gloves while field dressing animals) that could predispose individuals to contract infectious diseases in light of emerging and potential threats (e.g., chronic wasting disease). [The work is published in a recent issue of *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*.](#)

Researchers from across OSU and from the Ohio Biodiversity Conservation Partnership co-authored a paper focused on land use legacy and habitat conditions for eastern massasauga rattlesnakes. [It appeared in *Global Ecology and Conservation* in late 2017 and can be found at the following link.](#)

The last contribution is hot off the presses and was published in *Urban Ecosystems*. Exploring spatio-temporal variation in dominant and subordinate carnivore species, the article indicates that a “human shield” effect may be provided for certain carnivore species in close proximity to urban development. For more details on the work stemming from Cleveland Metro Parks and looking closely at coyote-red fox interactions, [click on the included hyperlink.](#)



Wildlife Services – Oral History Initiative for Trapping

I am including this feature as part of the effort to increase the amount of interesting and/or useful content we provide to you in our biannual newsletter. We recognize everyone gets more emails than you probably have time for or have desire to read, so we want to make sure this is worth your while. [As a disclaimer and to quote the webpage this is linked to:](#)

“The following interview transcripts from the Wildlife Services Trapping Oral History Initiative do not represent the policy, views, or official history of the Federal government or the USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services program. The Wildlife Services program respects and realizes that trapping is a sensitive issue for many people.”

With that said, some of these interview transcripts are remarkable as some true old-timers recount their careers post-retirement. Probably not for everyone, but if you find history to be interesting, this can keep you occupied for hours.

University of Rio Grande Student Chapter Update

The chapter covered student registrations for the Ohio Fish and Wildlife Conference in Columbus in January (15 attended) and the Ohio Natural History Conference in Cleveland in February (19 attended). We also toured the Perkins Wildlife Center and Cleveland Museum of Natural History's "back room" to see a portion of the 10,000+ ornithological collection; our guide was Dr. Andy Jones. The major field project this year focused on enhancing the nesting and roosting potential several species of birds and mammals on a 200-acre plus local family farm. The chapter members built and installed 50 bluebird boxes, 2 wood duck boxes, 4 bat houses, and 2 kestrel boxes. Our first check of the bluebird boxes in late April yielded signs of almost 50% of the boxes having some kind of bluebird and/or tree swallow nesting activity. The chapter has also partnered with the Gallia County Conservation Club to support an annual \$500 student scholarship starting this fall. The final fun activity of the year was a fishing and canoe/kayak float on Tycoon Lake.





Ohio State University Student Chapter Update

Over the course of the 2017-2018 academic year, the OSU Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society has been busy with developing students' skills and knowledge. At the beginning of the year we kicked off our wildlife activities with a visit to the Trap History Museum with a tour from the owner, Tom Parr. Next, the club volunteered to help with the wetland restoration at Coyote Run Farms down in Pickerington. We hope to make this an ongoing project and help the owners, Dave and Tammy, with future projects. To finish off the autumn semester, we had an outing to Stages Pond State Nature Preserve to dive deeper into wetland restoration and preservation. This trip was led by retired preservation manager, Jim Osborn.

The winter months during the spring semester led to a lull in outdoor activities, but the club still stayed busy! We promoted attendance at the, now, OWMA Conference. Overall, we had good turnout and are planning to continue attending this event as long as it continues. Since

outdoor activities were limited, the club managed to get a behind the scenes tour at the Columbus Aquarium led by Ramon Villaverde, a full time staff member working to develop methods of aquaculture for coral. Once the weather warmed up, we made a trip back out to Coyote Run Farms to pull some vernal pool traps in order to help them generate a list of species on the property. Finally, during a April a group of members visited Old Woman Creek NERR site to help the research coordinator, Kristi Arend, start their fish sampling earlier than it had ever been done before! Looking forward, we have been planning how to encourage attendance at the national and regional conferences in Cleveland in the upcoming months and beginning to think about what events we would like to repeat next year.





Autumn 2018 Student Chapter Workshop – 9/29 @ Rio Grande



OCTWS FALL STUDENT WORKSHOP

Networking, Resumes, and Southern Flying Squirrels

September 29th 9:00am-4:00pm
University of Rio Grande Campus



**UNIVERSITY OF
RIO GRANDE**
AND RIO GRANDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- 9:00a – 9:30a Quiz Bowl**
- 9:30a – 10:30a Resume Feedback**
- 10:45a – 11:15a Interviewing Do's and Don'ts**
- 11:15a – 12:00p Building Your Network**
- 12:00p – 1:00p Lunch**
- 1:00p – 4:00p SFS Box Checks**



PHOTO: DUSTIN EDENS

The Student Wildlife Research Symposium—A Future in the Making

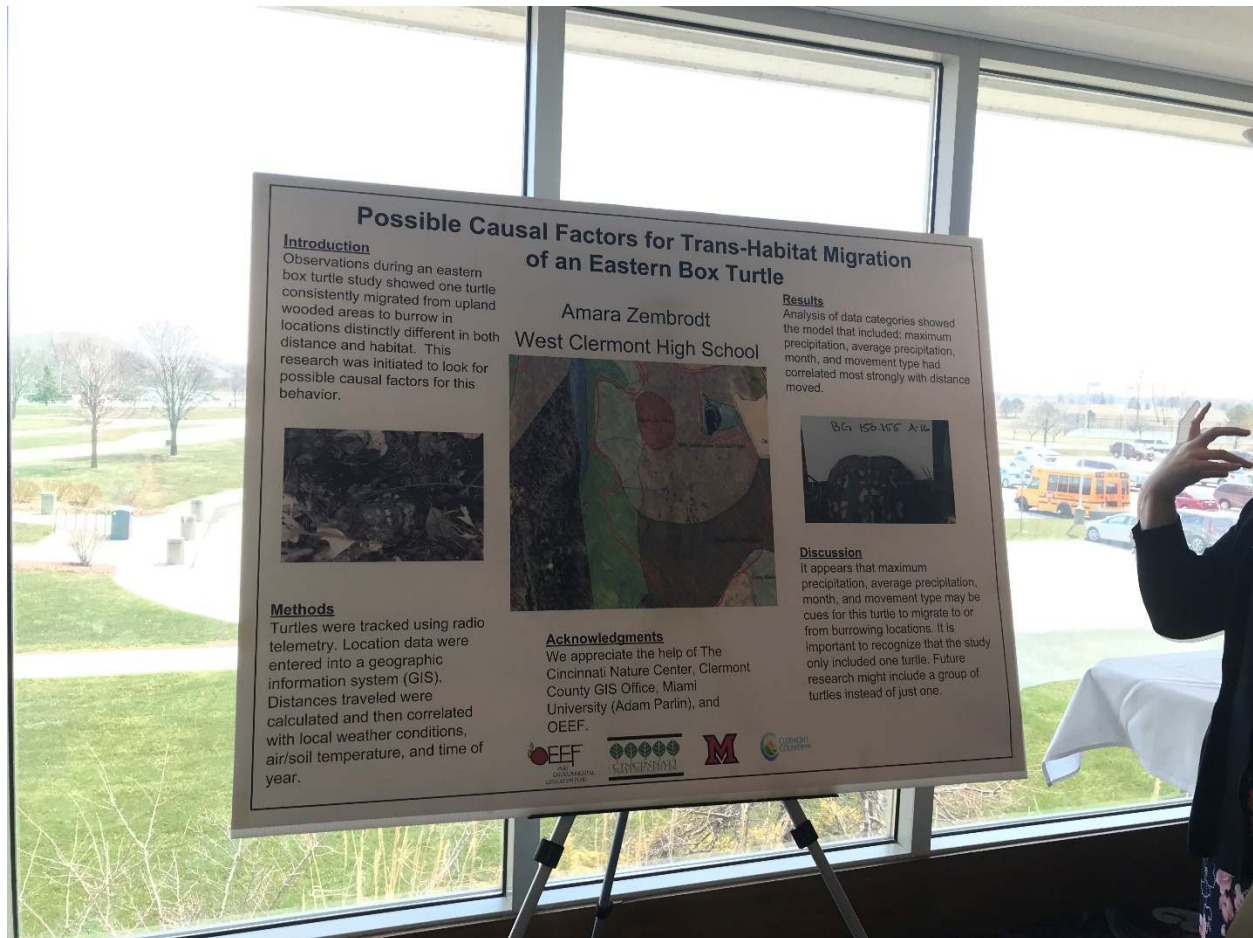
A special thanks to Jen Dennison for this contribution. Jen is the Wildlife Education Coordinator for the ODNR-Division of Wildlife. She specializes in providing educational resources and professional development to formal and non-formal educators.

On April 12, 2018, the ODNR-Division of Wildlife partnered with the Environmental Education Council of Ohio to host the Second Annual Student Wildlife Research Symposium (SWRS) at Maumee Bay State Park. The SWRS hosted five student speakers and over a dozen student poster presenters for the day in what we hope will become the premier event for high school students to present their research. The SWRS focuses on wildlife and wildlife habitat-related research that is conducted within the course of a high school student's lessons or as part of a special project with their school.

Today's high school students are smart, tech-savvy, and are becoming increasingly interested in the natural world around them. Today's high school teachers are motivated, have more access to technology, and are looking for opportunities to challenge their students in ways that appeal to their youthful desire to make an impact in the world. Recent changes in state standards are moving toward requiring students to not just answer questions on tests, but to be able to demonstrate their knowledge in the form of research projects, inquiry-based lessons, and project-based learning experiences. Students are learning the scientific skills needed to conduct real research, and not just in a laboratory. Students are learning how to conduct field investigations and research to improve their knowledge about and solve problems in their local environment. That's where we come in.



It's been a long-time dream of mine to provide an opportunity for high school students and teachers to showcase the research and projects they are conducting in their classes. Aside from some citizen science programs and State Science Days, there isn't much opportunity for high school students to showcase their projects, let alone contribute to real science. I wanted to provide an experience that accomplished three main goals: 1) provide a student experience that modelled a real research symposium, 2) provide a venue to showcase their legitimate research projects to Ohio research professionals, and 3) to provide an opportunity for high school teachers and research professionals to network and find ways to collaborate.



The SWRS was modelled after the highly successful Ohio Wildlife Diversity Conference and the Ohio Fish and Wildlife Conference, two premier events that provide a venue to showcase current research related to Ohio wildlife species and their habitats. In those two events, university and agency professionals present papers to audiences made up of their peers and, in the case of Wildlife Diversity Conference in particular, other members of the public with a general interest in wildlife. The SWRS follows a similar format in providing opportunities for presentations and posters to be presented to similar audience types.

Last year's SWRS, being the first ever symposium of its kind in Ohio, was a real joy to experience. The students were engaging, their research was interesting and relevant, and watching them interact with each other was especially enjoyable. They quizzed each other on methodology selection, continued research opportunities, and more. Several of them told us that they preferred this type of event because it wasn't competitive, they could relax and enjoy the other presenters, they could converse with the other students, and they appreciated the opportunity to interact with professionals in the broad field of environmental science.

This year's event was no different. With a slightly larger audience than the first year, we saw an excellent keynote in Greg Lipps, who highlighted current research in Ohio amphibians and reptiles. The students also got to spend their lunch hour talking to professionals in the audience as well as Division of Wildlife staff that were on hand with a wide variety of equipment and tools to showcase career opportunities in this field. The teachers told us that they really appreciated the opportunity to bring their students to this type of venue and found it to be an extremely valuable experience for their students in exposure to career opportunities and for future research opportunities should they pursue a degree in a related field.



We hope that this event continues to grow. We'd like to expand our partnership opportunities as well as grow our audience to include more researchers and professionals in the field to attend. These students are the future of our field and any support that can be given to encouraging their participation and helping them to choose a related career path can benefit not only our agencies and organizations, but the future health and sustainability of our overall environment. If you'd like to support future Student Wildlife Research Symposiums, please contact me Jen Dennison at 1-800-WILDLIFE or Brenda Metcalf, the Executive Director of EECO at director@eeco-online.org General information about the SWRS and past presentations can be found online at <http://wildohio.gov/swrs>.

The Student Wildlife Research Symposium—An OCTWS Perspective

As wildlife professionals, we are ecstatic to see the initial two years' of success that the Student Wildlife Research Symposium has enjoyed. The Ohio Chapter of The Wildlife Society has a long history of supporting the State Science Fair through the Wildlife Awareness Award. For 2018, OCTWS will continue to support the State Science Fair but will award only a first place top prize, rather than the traditional first *and* second place award. This modification gives us the latitude to apply the same amount of resources to the Student Wildlife Research Symposium and sponsor a best project and/or best presentation award for that event moving forward. We will keep the membership updated, likely reporting more details and having a discussion at the next member's business meeting.

Wildlife Legislation/Policy Update

Hopefully everyone receives the monthly update on policy-related wildlife news through TWS' Conservation Affairs Network (CAN for short). I've embedded the June 2018 report here. A couple notables include a great update on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act which grew out of the Blue Ribbon Panel. A list of recently added new co-sponsors notes Ohio 15th District's Congressman Steve Stivers (R) recently signed on as an advocate of the act. A short paragraph on Farm Bill progress is also included. Within the past week, the House passed its revisions of the legislation but a showdown in the Senate is now imminent.

Cleveland TWS Conference Field Trips and Workshops

June 30 is the early registration deadline for October's conference in Cleveland, so be diligent to make sure you take advantage of discounts there. As you register, be aware that there are field trips available as well as some working group workshops that may interest some. Language below was provided by Jon Cepek on behalf of the field trips planning committee. Thanks Jon!!

First, the workshop is titled "Wildlife conservation in Cleveland: stories of urban restoration and cooperative management" will be October 7th, 8-5 PM. Cleveland has undergone an incredible revival since the Cuyahoga River caught fire and fueled a national environmental movement. Industrial areas now share space with beaver, peregrine falcons and urban habitat restoration projects. The workshop will be entirely in the field visiting the Cleveland Lakefront and areas of the award winning Cleveland Metroparks. Acacia Reservation is a former golf course that is being transitioned into a model urban ecological preserve. Participants will view forest, meadow and stream restoration projects and discuss conservation partnerships and the challenges of transforming a golf course into high quality habitat. Tinkers' Creek Scenic Gorge

is a National Natural Landmark. White-tailed deer research and management, a long-term plant community monitoring program, and the challenges of forest management will be discussed during a hike between the scenic overlook and the beautiful Bridal Veil Falls. Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve is one of the top 10 birding spots in Northeast Ohio. Visitors now hike, enjoy wildlife, and experience the prime views of Lake Erie and the Cleveland skyline on what this former dredge disposal site. Just over 2 miles away are the runways of Burke Lakefront Airport which offers an interesting contrast in use of dredge disposal and wildlife management. Its location and green space on the south shores of Lake Erie offer challenges to keep wildlife and aviation separated. Wildlife research, management, and cooperative partnerships to prevent wildlife collisions with aircraft will be discussed as well as management techniques specific to airports. This workshop is designed to learn first-hand about conservation in an urban environment and provide opportunities to “compare notes” about urban wildlife management.

Second, on Tuesday October 9th from 1-5 PM and then again on Thursday October 11th from 8 AM-noon, is a field trip “Around the Emerald Necklace.” Cleveland may not be known for its gemstones, but the 18 reservations that largely encircle the city are the crown jewels of Cleveland Metroparks. Nicknamed the Emerald Necklace, the reservations are 23,000 acres of natural areas, reclaimed habitat, waterfront parks, and recreational spaces within the metropolitan area that hide breathtaking waterfalls, gorgeous hemlock forests, and of course, an abundance of native wildlife species. This tour will take you around the necklace, highlighting wildlife partnerships with local, state and federal cooperators and the research and management of species such as coyotes, white-tailed deer, and Blandings’ turtles. Threats such as the hemlock woolly adelgid, beech leaf disease and invasive species will also be discussed. Experience habitat restoration first-hand at the new Acacia Reservation, where a former golf course is being transitioned into a model urban ecological preserve. The reservation, located across the street from a major shopping center, will provide wildlife habitat, filter and treat storm water, and provide a unique opportunity for people to enjoy plants and wildlife native to northern Ohio.

Finally, a field trip to the Perkins Wildlife Center at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History (8 AM-noon on Tuesday, October 9th and Thursday, October 11th from 1-5 PM) will immerse attendees in Ohio’s natural environment during this behind the scenes tour of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History’s all-new Perkins Wildlife Center & Woods Garden. Stroll through a wetlands community teeming with fish, turtles and frogs; peer directly into the aquatic world of playful North American river otters; and gain a new appreciation for the agility of bobcats and gray foxes as they traverse trailways directly overhead. Catch unique views of Cleveland’s skyline and the surrounding University Circle neighborhood as you take in all the amazing sights. After traveling seamlessly through five distinct ecological communities, we’ll take you into the Museum’s laboratories where you’ll hear about unique research projects and explore the largest collection of praying mantises (Mantodea) in the Western Hemisphere.



TWS 25th Annual Conference

!!REGISTER NOW!!

OCTOBER 7—11, 2018

***Stay tuned for more details on the 79th Midwest Fish
& Wildlife Conference (January 27-30, 2019)***

Mailing Address for Ohio Chapter of TWS:

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Executive Committee Members:

Geoff Westerfield – President
Michael Enright – Past President
Grace Dietsch – President Elect
Gabriel Karns – Secretary
Andy Merkle - Treasurer