

# Southwest Section Newsletter

Spring 2019 - Vol. 9 Issue #1



## From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

State News

International News

Tribal News

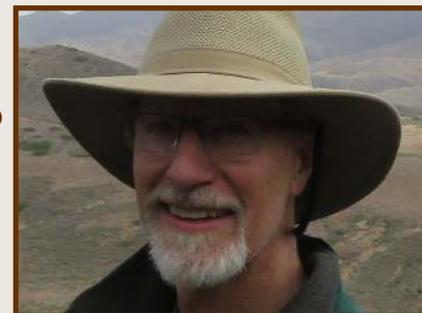
Student Chapters

Council News

## President's Message

### Tad Theimer - 2019 President SW Section of The Wildlife Society

Presidents of boards are like sea captains, given the command of a vessel for a short period of time and then passing the ship off to a new captain. Some captains are firebrands, filled with energy and vision, who chart new courses and find new ports. Our past SWS president Ginny Seamster was one of those. Under Ginny's captaincy, SWS charted new waters, establishing the SWS Graduate Student Research Grant and awarding that to graduate student Sara Weaver this past February. Sara has provided us with a brief update, so for more on Sara and her work, see the brief article later in the newsletter. Other board presidents are ship captains with less vision and energy, happy to simply keep the SWS ship afloat, on course and in good working order. I am that kind of captain. So, for this year, I see my task as primarily continuing to support those important programs and policies that SWS has supported in the past, and to hopefully leave the SWS ship in good running shape for in-coming president Fidel Hernandez.



So first, I look forward to receiving this year's set of applications for the Graduate Student Research Grant Award and to selecting another deserving student later this year. Second, SWS has committed again this year, as it has in the past, to supporting the national TWS meeting at the level of \$500, thereby making it a proud supporter of the 2019 "Drive for 44" to support our Annual National Conference. Third, the SWS played an important role in inception of Women of Wildlife (WOW) and our board is proud to again this year offer monetary support for the efforts of that dedicated group to support women in our profession. Fourth, for many years, SWS has been working in various ways to foster stronger bonds with our professional colleagues in Mexico, with the ultimate goal of developing a TWS chapter there that would be a welcome addition to the SWS. We all acknowledge that southwest wildlife observe no political boundaries, unless forced to do so by artificial barriers, and so creating stronger connections with our colleagues in Mexico is a natural step given our interest in natural resources that span the border. Past SW Section Representative and now in-coming SWS President Fidel Hernandez has been instrumental in laying the groundwork for closer ties with Mexico, and he has provided a bit of background, and exciting opportunities for furthering those ties, later in this newsletter.



## Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## President's Message (cont.)

### Tad Theimer - 2019 President SW Section of The Wildlife Society

For now, I am happy to report that we will be supporting some of the travel costs to allow one of the main proponents of a TWS chapter in Mexico, Dr. Luis A. Tarango-Arambula, to attend the national conference in Reno so that he may participate in the workshop entitled "What does the future of TWS international involvement look like?". Fifth, SWS has traditionally encouraged members to pursue accreditation as Certified Wildlife Biologists, and again this year, SWS will offer a limited number of small financial assistance grants toward accreditation costs for SWS members. Funds for those awards are limited, so awards will be provided on a first-come-first-served basis. Finally, this past year has seen an upsurge in public interest and concern around "killing contests", with passage of state legislation to ban such contests in New Mexico, and publication of an Issue Statement produced by TWS Council. I and the SWS board are interested in supporting and furthering any efforts by state chapters and members within the SWS, and in working with other sections on this issue, especially efforts to potentially develop a more detailed and comprehensive position statement.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity serve as president for SWS. I thank the remarkable group of folks I am fortunate enough to have serving as members of this year's board and I look forward to a productive year.



*Photo: Tad Theimer radiotracking a spotted skunk on Santa Cruz Island, California*

*Courtesy of Calypso Gagorik*

#### From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

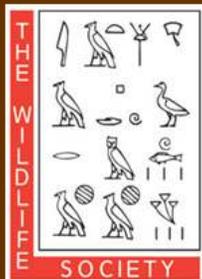
State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



#### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section Newsletter

Spring 2019 - Vol. 9 Issue #1



From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



## In this Issue

### Table of Contents

#### From the Board

President's Message	1
Southwest Section Tracks – SW Section Rep's message	4

#### Student News

Bats and Wind Energy: Conflicts and Resolution	6
Student Chapter of the Year Award 2019	8

#### Section News and Information

Director's Corner Mexico	9
Director's Corner US	13
TWS Leadership Institute Class of 2019	16
Killing Contests	17
The Wildlife Professional	21
SWS Board & Committee Chairs	22
Join! Membership form	23

Thanks to the contributors to this newsletter: **Tad Theimer, Jim Ramakka, Sara Weaver**, Dr. Gilberto Wenglas Lara, and Carter Smith. A special thank you to **Maria Araulo** for her continued efforts contacting contributors in Mexico for the SWS TWS newsletter and translating their articles.

Remember, this is YOUR newsletter. Please consider contributing articles or photos about your work or topics of interest to Southwest Section members.

We would love more articles from both student and professional members!

Deadline for articles for the next newsletter is **August 1**.



#### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## Southwest Section Tracks

### Jim Ramakka, Southwest Section Rep to Council

The snow has finally melted in Northwest New Mexico and now the March winds have started. Hopefully they will calm down before we're faced with our usual Spring dust storms.

Over the past month I was lucky enough to squeeze travel between winter storms to attend the Joint Annual Meeting of the Arizona and New Mexico Chapter meetings in Albuquerque, the Texas Chapter Meeting in Montgomery, and the Spring TWS Council meeting in Denver.



I always look forward to TWS Chapter meetings as way keep up on the latest research and management issues in the Southwest and for the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and colleagues. The AZ/NM JAM banquet and award ceremony began with a very nice memorial to Dr. Sandford D. Schemnitz presented by Dr. Martha Desmond his colleague at NMSU. Sandy was my M.S. advisor at the University of Maine before he moved on to be the first head of the Wildlife program at NMSU. Over the years Sandy trained hundreds of students and received the 2017 Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award for Conservation before his passing in May 2018.

It was especially gratifying to see old friends John Sherman (Wildlife Program Lead for BLM NM) and Stan Cunningham (Arizona State Univ.) receive awards for their career accomplishments. They are both outstanding wildlife biologists who have had a lasting influence on wildlife management in the Southwest.

A week and a half after the JAM, I left a foot and a half snow and single digit temperatures behind to fly to the Houston area to attend my first Texas Chapter meeting. Again, it was great to catch up with friends and to observe a large gathering that, in many ways, mirrored the complexity and excitement that students and professionals experience at TWS Annual Meetings. The Chapter Executive Board and the various committees did an outstanding job developing and presenting a program with an outstanding plenary session, 5 workshops, film presentations, 2 poster sessions, 13 technical sessions, 2 sessions devoted to "Finding Your Dream Job", and plenty of opportunities for students to interact with working professionals.

Attending these Chapter meetings certainly highlighted the unique characteristics of the states that make up our section as well as the underlying interest and passion for wildlife so characteristic of our profession. That passion is also shared by our colleagues in Mexico. Dr. Luis Tarango gave an excellent presentation at the Texas Chapter business meeting describing the success of the First Annual Conference on Wildlife Conservation and Management in Mexico. Due to the efforts of Fidel Hernandez, The Wildlife Society donated \$5,000 to help fund the conference. Likewise, NMSU Emeritus Professor Dr.



From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



#### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## Southwest Section Tracks

### Jim Ramakka, Southwest Section Rep to Council

Raul Valdez deserves special recognition for his significant logistical and personal financial contributions to the conference.

I had to leave the Texas Chapter meeting a little early in order to prepare for the TWS Spring Council meeting that started a few days later. Council spent two full days reviewing and discussing committee reports, TWS staff activities and accomplishments, as well as examining a variety of budget issues. A brief summary of some of the main topics discussed is presented below.

Hopefully folks will note that, while the deadline for nominations for TWS Awards has passed, it is time to be thinking about next year. Please take the time to review the award criteria at <http://wildlife.org/engage/awards/> and consider nominating folks worthy of recognition.

Finally, I hope everyone will try to attend the joint TWS/AFS Annual Meeting Reno this Fall. It should be a great event!



2019 Texas Chapter The Wildlife Society

Jim Ramakka (top right) with Bill & Darlene Bartush and Deborah Holle

*Photo courtesy of Jim Ramakka*

From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

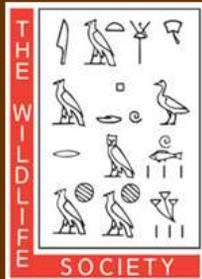
State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



#### Current Members

AZ NM TX Int Oth  
72 70 104 2 39

# Southwest Section News



## Student News

### Bats and Wind Energy: Conflicts and Resolution

By Sara Weaver—Recipient of SWS TWS 2018/19 Graduate Student Award

Wind energy is a vital component in the fight against climate change, which is considered by many conservation groups to be the largest threat facing wildlife populations today. However, like all energy sources, it is not without its impacts. An unintended consequence of wind energy development has been bat fatalities documented at wind turbines worldwide. In fact, these fatalities are so common that wind turbines are considered by some to be the largest source of bat fatalities in the world. While we are still working to understand this issue, there is strong evidence that bats are attracted to wind turbines. Although the cause of this attraction is still debated. Nevertheless, there have been observed patterns in the timing of fatalities. For instance, fatalities tend to peak in mid-summer to early fall in most places, which is a time of year overlapping with fall migration and mating. In addition, there are environmental variables that coincide with fatalities, such as low wind speeds and increasing temperature.



*Photo courtesy of Sara Weaver*

We have learned about these components through vital research. Research that is necessary for making informed decisions on how to reduce impacts. However, bat and wind energy research in the U.S. has been restricted primarily to the Midwest and Northeast. Texas is the largest producer of wind energy in the nation with more than 13,000 wind turbines on the landscape from 144 project sites, with more under development. While many facilities conduct studies to satisfy the recommendations made by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services in their voluntary Land-based Wind Energy Guidelines, fewer than 10 facilities in Texas have made their data publicly available. In order for us to truly understand wind energy impacts to bats and be able to accurately refine impact reduction strategies, we have to increase transparency and publication of data collected not only in Texas, but the Southwestern U.S.



From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

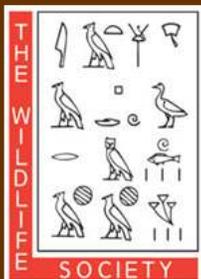
State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



#### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## Student News ( cont.)

### Sara Weaver—Bats and Wind Energy: Conflicts and Resolution

My research has been focused on quantifying, understanding, and reducing wind energy impacts to bats in the south Texas region, an area of increasing wind energy development. Recently, I was able to estimate bat fatality rates and complete successful trials of an ultrasonic acoustic deterrent for reducing bat fatalities at a facility near the U.S.-Mexico border. I am very excited about this technology, and knowing that more bats are alive today because of my work has been a reward in and of itself. I plan to continue in this line of research after graduation, and was recently awarded a grant to further increase the deterrent's effectiveness. My hope is that we are able to optimize these deterrents so that bats and wind energy can coexist. I will defend my dissertation this summer, and anticipate moving into a tenure-track position at Texas A&M University-San Antonio soon after, where I currently work as a full-time lecturer.



*Photo courtesy of Sara Weaver*

I am immensely honored to be the first recipient of the Southwestern Section's graduate student award. This has been a highlight of my academic career, and an accomplishment I will always cherish. I want to thank the scholarship committee and others



involved with the award for recognizing my hard work and the value this research has for global bat conservation. I look forward to reading about the amazing research of subsequent recipients in the future.

*Photo courtesy of Sara Weaver*

From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

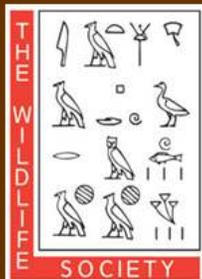
State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



#### Current Members

AZ NM TX Int Oth  
72 70 104 2 39

# Southwest Section News



## Student News ( cont. )

**Dana Kobilinsky—The Wildlife Society associate editor**



TWS Past President John McDonald with members of the Texas A&M—Kingsville Student Chapter. *Photo courtesy of The Wildlife Society*

Texas A&M University-Kingsville took home the 2018 [Student Chapter of the Year award](#) at this year's annual TWS conference in Cleveland.

Student chapters that actively and effectively help The Wildlife Society achieve its goals are recognized with the award. These chapters are also important in strengthening the Society's membership recruitment and retention efforts.

The Texas A&M University-Kingsville Student Chapter helped The Wildlife Society meet its goals of promoting professional standards for wildlife research, education and management. In particular, it helped educate wildlife students and educators about the TWS certification program.

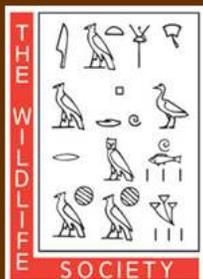
The chapter developed a list of courses that Texas A&M University-Kingsville students could take in order to become certified. It also included links to the approved courses for certification on The Wildlife Society's website and on the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's website. The chapter also invited guest speakers to its regular meetings who often talked about the importance of certification. Some of those speakers included game wardens, taxidermists, professors, lecturers and graduate students.

As part of the award, the student chapter, led by President Kelley Wood, received a \$1,000 travel grant that helped members attend the annual TWS conference in Cleveland. They also received a special certificate at the awards ceremony in Cleveland. Their names will be added to a permanent plaque on display at The Wildlife Society's headquarters.

[http://wildlife.org/texas-am-university-kingsville-earns-student-chapter-of-the-year/?utm\\_source=getresponse&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=current\\_members\\_tws&utm\\_content=This+Week%27s+eWildlifer+%26+TWS+Talks](http://wildlife.org/texas-am-university-kingsville-earns-student-chapter-of-the-year/?utm_source=getresponse&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=current_members_tws&utm_content=This+Week%27s+eWildlifer+%26+TWS+Talks)



- From the Board
- Southwest Section
- National News
- State News
- International News
- Tribal News
- Student Chapters
- Council News



### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## Director's Corner ~ Mexico

### Dr. Gilberto Wenglas Lara

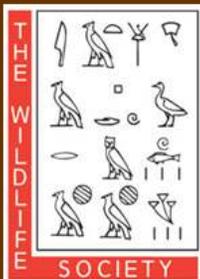


The Ecology Department of the state of Chihuahua is dedicated to the conservation of natural resources through sustainable use which we implement through hunting permits, registration of ranches managing for wildlife, known as UMAs, and their respective wildlife management plans, permits for extractive use as well as the actual administration of license tags.

Chihuahua is the largest state in the Republic of Mexico, occupying 12.6% of the national territory. Its size and geography are the framework for diverse ecosystems and natural resources that make it one of the leading states in rich diversity of species. It has breathtaking scenery of deserts, valleys and mountains as well as internationally significant wetlands. These habitats can be challenging when hunting but at the same time offer different complementary recreational activities such as hiking, photo safaris, mountain biking, horseback riding and camping, among others. At the same time, Chihuahua is known for its unique cuisine and cultural zones of great significance.

The state of Chihuahua, through the Department of Urban Development and Ecology known as SEDUE, and in coordination with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Autonomous University of Chihuahua Department of Animal Science and Ecology and Pronatura Noreste, will conduct a workshop on Wildlife Management and Range Management October 3-5 in Chihuahua City. Workshop objectives include strengthening methodologies and building capacity among technicians, landowners and UMA administrators. An important component is the development of wildlife management plans and UMA registration centered on extension work for the state's flora and fauna.

- From the Board
- Southwest Section
- National News
- State News
- International News
- Tribal News
- Student Chapters
- Council News



### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## Director's Corner ~ Mexico (continued)

**Dr. Gilberto Wenglas Lara**

Another important work area is the collaboration with organizations such as World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Pronatura Noreste, A.C., through the signing of agreements to promote the rational use of water, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. In addition, Chihuahua collaborates in federal government programs through the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas known as CONANP in programs such as priority species for the conservation, monitoring and reintroduction of key species to Chihuahua landscapes such as: bison (*Bison bison*), desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) all of which have co-existed in the extensive grasslands of Chihuahua.

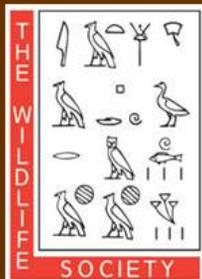
The state has also conducted status research on different species in different ecosystems and micro endemisms such as Julimes pupfish (*Cyprinodon julimes*) which is noteworthy as a fish that inhabits one of the hottest springs in the state with temperatures oscillating between 39 and 47 degree Celsius. Subsequently, the Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Biodiversity of the State of Chihuahua, known the acronym ECUSBIOECH, was developed. The Strategy proposes actions to maintain and enhance practices that promote the knowledge, sustainable use and conservation of the state's biodiversity.

Additionally, coordination activities have been undertaken with US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) to control the exotic invasive species of feral swine (*Sus scrofa*), which is causing serious damage to the flora, fauna and agriculture of the state.

The aforementioned keeps us committed to a healthy ecology, which provides unique hunting opportunities as well as tourist attractions. The state offers the best destinations within its vast territory.



- From the Board
- Southwest Section
- National News
- State News
- International News
- Tribal News
- Student Chapters
- Council News



### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## Director's Corner ~ Mexico

- From the Board
- Southwest Section
- National News
- State News
- International News
- Tribal News
- Student Chapters
- Council News



**Dr. Gilberto Wenglas Lara**

En la Dirección de Ecología de Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua, se trabaja diariamente a favor de la conservación de los recursos naturales a través de un aprovechamiento sustentable, el cual se lleva a cabo por medio de la atención de los trámites de licencia de cacería deportiva, registro de predios como Unidades de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre (UMA), expedición de autorizaciones de aprovechamiento

extractivo, así como la emisión de cintillos de cobro cinegético.

Chihuahua es el estado más grande de la República Mexicana, ocupando el 12.6% del territorio nacional. Su extensión y geografía enmarcan diversos ecosistemas y recursos naturales, siendo uno de los primeros estados del país por su riqueza de especies. Cuenta con imponentes paisajes de desierto, valles y montaña, así como humedales de importancia internacional, los cuales representan un reto en la búsqueda de los mejores ejemplares, además de ofrecer varias actividades complementarias distintas a la temporada de caza, tales como: senderismo, safari fotográfico, ciclismo de montaña, paseos a caballo, campismo, entre otras. Por otro lado, cuenta con zonas de gran importancia cultural y una gastronomía única.

El Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua, a través de la Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología (SDUE), en coordinación con Texas Parks & Wildlife Department del Gobierno de Texas, la Facultad de Zootecnia y Ecología de la Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua (UACH), así como Pronatura Noreste, A.C., llevarán a cabo el Taller denominado Gestión de Vida Silvestre y Manejo Integral de Pastizales, los días 03, 04 y 05 de octubre, en la ciudad de Chihuahua, Chih., el cual tiene como objetivo fortalecer las metodologías y capacidades de técnicos, propietarios y administradores de UMA, además de la gestión y desarrollo de planes de manejo en materia de vida silvestre, enfocados en el extensionismo de la flora y fauna en el Estado.



### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## Director's Corner ~ Mexico

(continued)

**Dr. Gilberto Wenglas Lara**

Por otro lado, se está trabajando en colaboración con instancias como el Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza (WWF) y Pronatura Noreste, A.C., mediante la firma de convenios, los cuales fomentan el uso racional del agua, la conservación de la biodiversidad y el desarrollo sustentable. Además, se colabora en programas con el Gobierno Federal a través de la Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP), como el de especies prioritarias para la conservación y el de monitoreo y reintroducción de especies clave a los ecosistemas de Chihuahua, tales como: bisonte americano (*Bison bison*), borrego cimarrón (*Ovis canadensis*), lobo gris mexicano (*Canis lupus*), águila real (*Aquila chrysaetos*) y berrendo (*Antilocapra americana*), mismos que cohabitaron en las extensas praderas de pastizales de Chihuahua.

También se realizó un estudio de estado de diversas especies en los diferentes ecosistemas y micro endemismos como el cachorrito de Julimes (*Cyprinodon julimes*), el cual se destaca por ser un pez que habita en uno de los manantiales más calientes del estado, sus aguas oscilan entre los 39 y 47°C. Posteriormente, se desarrolló la Estrategia para la Conservación y Uso Sustentable de la Biodiversidad del Estado de Chihuahua (ECUSBIOECH), donde se proponen acciones para mantener y potenciar las prácticas que promuevan el conocimiento, el uso sustentable y conservación de la biodiversidad del estado.

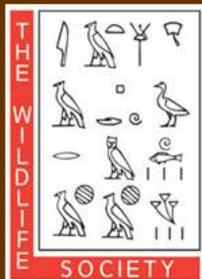
Adicionalmente, en coordinación con United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) y la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), se están realizando actividades de control de la especie exótica invasora cerdo feral (*Sus scrofa*), el cual está causando graves daños a la flora, la fauna y las actividades agrícolas del estado.

Por lo anterior, en el estado de Chihuahua estamos comprometidos con el medio ambiente, además de representar una experiencia única tanto en actividades cinegéticas como turísticas, ofreciendo los mejores destinos dentro de su vasto territorio.

*NOTE FROM THE EDITORS: A huge thank you to Maria I. Araujo, International Affairs Director of Texas Parks & Wildlife for making these Director's Corners from Mexico happen and translating these articles.*



- From the Board
- Southwest Section
- National News
- State News
- International News
- Tribal News
- Student Chapters
- Council News



### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## Director's Corner ~ Texas

**Carter Smith ; Texas Parks & Wildlife**



They are called “*National Geographic moments*” for a reason — sights and sounds and settings of certain wildlife spectacles that are so memorable, so special and so singularly unique that they remain indelibly etched in our memories, just like the iconic pictures from the fabled magazine.

I have been blessed to witness more than a few of those— peregrines dive-bombing redheads in the Laguna Madre; a pair of coyotes stalking and taking a pronghorn in the desert grasslands; the primal booming and mating ritual displayed by prairie-chickens in the Panhandle; massive kettles of migrating hawks sailing down the coast; clusters of transplanted bighorn sheep settling into their new cliffside abodes.

There may be one, however, that stands above them all. It was October 2007 or 2008, as I best recall it. A group of friends and I were making our way down the Devil’s River when the first little cool front of the year came through. It was more bark than bite, but it dropped a little rain and had enough wind to add a noticeable chill to the semi-desert air. By the next morning, the front had passed, the winds had calmed, and the dawn skies were bright blue.

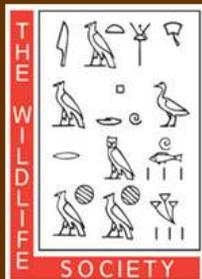
There was something else, however, that the front had left for us. The sycamores towering along the river’s edge were draped in some of Mother Nature’s Sunday finery. In fact, nary an inch of their limbs and leaves could be seen at all. The trees were covered with orange and black and brown and white spots.

It was a monarch fall-out, and a spectacular one at that.

Tens of thousands of monarch butterflies had sought refuge in the protective canopies of the big trees. As the dawn relinquished its grip on the morning, the butterflies began to gradually stir, raising and lowering their wings, shaking off their evening slumber. And then, just like that, they were off, lifting up from the trees in big, intermittent waves, headed south, down the river, to a destination where they would make their winter home.



- From the Board
- Southwest Section
- National News
- State News
- International News
- Tribal News
- Student Chapters
- Council News



### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39



# Southwest Section News



- From the Board
- Southwest Section
- National News
- State News
- International News
- Tribal News
- Student Chapters
- Council News

## Director's Corner ~ Texas

(continued)

**Carter Smith**

The 3,000-mile, biannual journey of the monarchs is one of nature's many migratory wonders. Texas acts as something of a linchpin for this migration, serving as part of the fairway and the funnel for the Central Flyway population that comes down from Canada, through the Great Plains and across Texas before making its way to the oyamel fir forests of Michoacan for the winter.

In the last two decades, monarchs have suffered a precipitous decline in numbers — as much as 90 percent, scientists estimate. There are a number of reasons— illegal harvesting of the fir trees on the wintering grounds; extreme weather events; changing agricultural practices in the Midwest cornfields; and a major decline in native milkweeds, the larval host plant for the migrating monarchs.

All is not lost, as countless organizations, landowners, agencies, and others are working to reverse the decline. To no one's surprise, resources to address this challenge, and many others like it, aren't particularly bountiful. But, with the introduction last year in Congress of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), perhaps hope is on the way with similar such legislation in 2019.

RAWA, the visionary product of a preeminent group of business and conservation leaders, collectively known as the "Blue Ribbon Panel," offers perhaps the boldest idea yet for addressing the longstanding funding gaps needed to conserve populations of native fish and wildlife that need it the most. If funded, RAWA would redirect \$1.3 billion of existing revenue annually to state based conservation efforts. Priority would be given to the research, conservation, and restoration needs of over 12,000 unique, rare, and/or imperiled native species identified in State Wildlife Action plans.

There is a lot to like about the proposed RAWA legislation, which is being backed by a diverse group of entities from the Congressional Sportsman's Foundation to the National Wildlife Federation. For starters, there is no tax increase required; it builds upon proven mechanisms of success like the Pittman-Robertson Act; it is locally driven; and not only helps species at risk, but also can be used to further connect people with nature and the out of doors.



### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



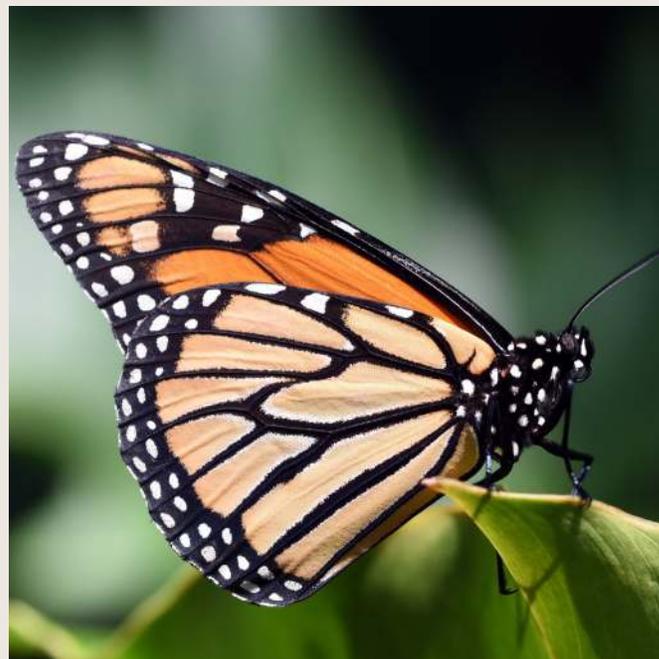
## Director's Corner ~ Texas

(continued)

**Carter Smith**

I'll be the first to admit that RAWA is a moonshot for sure. But, as any wildlifer can well attest, monarchs and thousands of other species across the country are long overdue in having a dedicated, sustained funding stream to ensure their recovery and place alongside species like deer, elk, turkey, waterfowl, and other game species.

I hope you will join the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife in getting behind the renewed push in 2019 for passage of the RAWA legislation. To learn more, visit [ournatureusa.com](http://ournatureusa.com). Thanks for caring about our wild things and wild places. They need you now more than ever.



*Photo: monarch butterfly*

*Courtesy of David Clode on Unsplash*



- From the Board
- Southwest Section
- National News
- State News**
- International News
- Tribal News
- Student Chapters
- Council News



### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## TWS Leadership Institute Class of 2019

### Congratulations from the Southwest Section!

**Auriel Fournier, AWB®** – Forbes Biological Station–Bellrose Waterfowl Research Center, Illinois Natural History Survey, Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**John Kinsey, CWB®** – Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

**Julia Nawrocki, AWB®** – Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

**Dustin Ranglack, CWB®** – University of Nebraska at Kearney

**Bill Severud, AWB®** – University of Minnesota

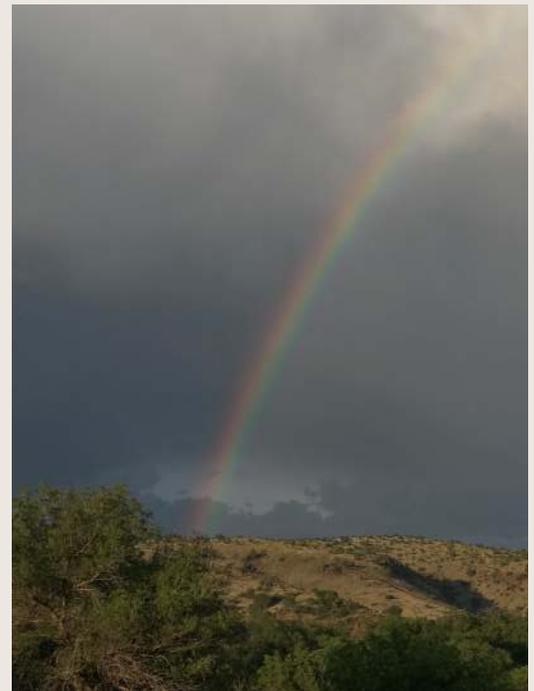
**Phillip Stephenso, AWB®** – U.S. Geological Survey, Tennessee

**Jake Haus, AWB®** – Bemidji State University, Minnesota

**Angela Larsen** – National Council for Air and Stream Improvement, South Carolina

**Molly O’Grady** – Research Cooperative of the University of Hawaii

**Justin Shew** – Lewis and Clark Community College/The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, Missouri



*Photo: Davis Mountains, Texas*

*Courtesy Misty L. Sumner*

From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

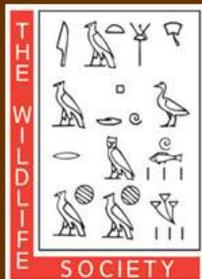
State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



#### Current Members

AZ NM TX Int Oth  
72 70 104 2 39

# Southwest Section News



## Killing Contests

### Tad Theimer - 2019 President SW Section of The Wildlife Society

I know this issue has been the center of animated and on-going discussions among members of several of our state chapters and Conservation Affairs Committees. In this brief overview, I have attempted to bring together facts that are easily available to all our members but may not have been brought together in one place. I am not promoting any one view over another. I encourage all members to commit to informing themselves on all aspects of this issue and to having open and frank discussions, as it is obviously an issue that will be with us for the foreseeable future.

As defined in the TWS Issue Statement ([https://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/TWS\\_IS\\_WildlifeKillingContest\\_ApprovedMarch2019.pdf](https://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/TWS_IS_WildlifeKillingContest_ApprovedMarch2019.pdf))

“Wildlife killing contests are organized, competitive contests where participants compete for cash or other prizes for killing animals in a specified location during a specific time period. They are conducted on a wide range of species including coyotes, bobcats, foxes, raccoons, crows, wolves, and prairie dogs.”

California banned wildlife killing contests in 2014, Vermont banned coyote killing contests in 2018. Coyote killing contests were banned on state trust lands in New Mexico earlier this year. New Mexico’s state legislature has approved Senate Bill 76 banning coyote killing contests and it is now up to the governor whether to sign that act into law. Similar bills are currently pending in New York, New Jersey, Oregon and Wisconsin.



*Photo: western coyote*

*Courtesy of Hanna May on Unsplash*



From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

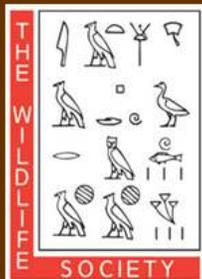
State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



#### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## Killing Contests (continued)

### Tad Theimer - 2019 President SW Section of The Wildlife Society

The text of New Mexico Senate Bill 76:

- A. It is unlawful for a person to organize, cause, sponsor, arrange, hold or participate in a coyote-killing contest.
- B. As used in this section, "coyote-killing contest" means an organized or sponsored competition with the objective of killing coyotes for prizes or entertainment.
- C. Organizing, causing, sponsoring, arranging or holding a coyote-killing contest consists of a person knowingly:
  - (1) planning, organizing or enticing a person to participate in a coyote-killing contest; or
  - (2) providing the venue for a coyote-killing contest.
- D. Participation in a coyote-killing contest consists of a person knowingly taking part in a coyote-killing contest.
- E. A person who organizes, causes, sponsors, arranges or holds a coyote-killing contest is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- F. A person who participates in a coyote-killing contest is guilty of a petty misdemeanor.
- G. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a person from protecting a person or property or the state game commission from carrying out the statutory authority allowed by Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 in a non-coyote-killing contest setting."

These contests take many forms, and I encourage folks to investigate for themselves to see the variation in monetary award amounts, number of animals taken, regulations and requirements. For those unfamiliar with contests, I provide the following two randomly drawn from those publicly available on the web for contests during the last year held in Arizona, New Mexico or Texas. Quotes from these are taken directly from websites for two different contests, both happened to be held in Texas:

"Coyote Calling Contest: Hunt starts at daylight Saturday morning and will end at check-in time of 3pm Sunday. This is a daylight only hunt. Legal shooting hours are 30 minutes before sunrise and 30 minutes after sundown. THIS HUNT IS SHOTGUN ONLY. NO SLUGS. This is a Coyote only hunt. This hunt has a 12 coyote limit. This hunt will payout 100% and will pay 3 places. Entry fee for the hunt is \$250 per team. \$50 of the entry fee



From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

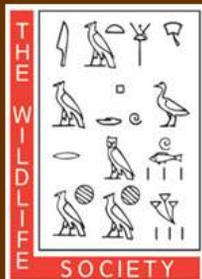
State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



#### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



## Killing Contests (continued)

### Tad Theimer - 2019 President SW Section of The Wildlife Society

goes into the Big Coyote pot. You may not shoot out of a moving vehicle. You may not shoot from a public road. All animals must be called in. Animals must make an advancement to the call. ATVs are allowed."

"Biggest bobcat contest: The Heaviest bobcat wins Grand Prize. Your team must kill either 5 grey fox OR 5 coyotes (NO MIXING OF THE TWO) in order to qualify your heaviest bobcat in the contest. (5 bobcats DO NOT qualify your team to weigh your big cat.) It is not necessary to qualify a bobcat to win the jackpots. The entry fee is \$200. \$170 of the fee goes towards 1st through 5th place biggest bobcat, and the remaining \$30 is divided between each of three jackpot prizes."



*Hunter participating in the Biggest Bobcat Contest*

*Photo courtesy of Misty L. Sumner*



From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



#### Current Members

AZ NM TX Int Oth  
72 70 104 2 39

# Southwest Section News



## Killing Contests (continued)

### Tad Theimer - 2019 President SW Section of The Wildlife Society

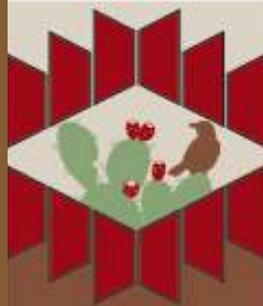
I end by again quoting the current TWS Issue statement and encourage you to look at it in full on the TWS website given in the opening paragraph.

“Management of these contests by state and provincial wildlife agencies varies widely. Each state or province, even ones adjacent to each other with similar demographics, can have very different regulations and agency approaches. ...

Killing contests differ from typical regulated hunting by the very nature of the organized public competition and prizes being given specifically for killing the largest, smallest, or most animals. “Big Buck” pools or organized record books differ from killing contests because the animals recognized in these competitions are harvested consistent with ordinary and generally accepted hunting practices and then introduced to the competition...

The policy of The Wildlife Society regarding wildlife killing contests:

1. Discourages contests that adversely affect the wildlife resource or the public appreciation of wildlife resources.
2. Supports that wildlife killed must be put to legitimate uses.
3. Opposes all contests that: a. intentionally wound animals in a manner that causes excess pain and suffering, b. kill parents resulting in orphaned, dependent young, c. or devalue wildlife by showing disrespectful photos of piles of dead animals.
4. Discourage contests that portray hunting in an unethical fashion. If a contest is held, all applicable permitting and hunting regulations must be followed during the contest by all parties involved.
5. Support public attitude surveys to determine societal values regarding killing contests and encourage agencies to consider these survey results when managing and regulating killing contests for controlling predator populations.
6. Recognize that there is little evidence to support the use of killing contests for controlling predator populations.
7. Recognize that while species killed in contests can be legally killed in most states, making a contest of it may undermine the public's view of ethical hunting.”



From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

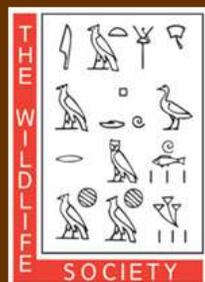
State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



#### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	30

# Southwest Section News



## The Wildlife Professional

**Misty L. Sumner - Editorial Advisory Board Member for SW Section**

From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

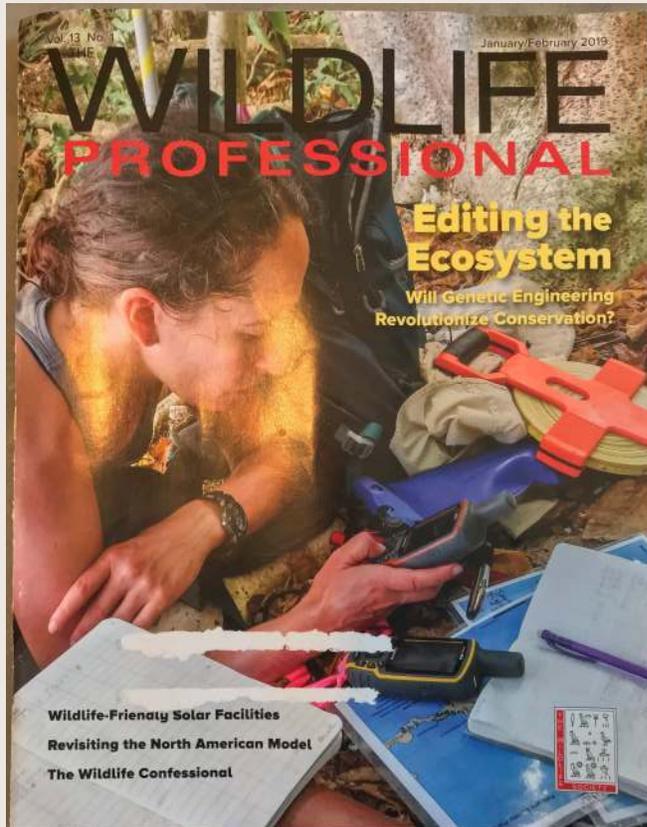
State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News



The Wildlife Professional has new leadership at the helm as Keith Norris, AWB® has taken on a new role within TWS as the new Director of Publications and Communications.

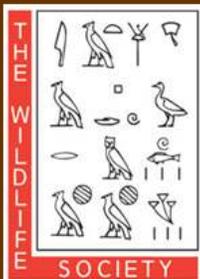
On page two of the *Wildlife Professional (TWP)* you will find this statement "The *Wildlife Professional* is the flagship publication of The Wildlife Society and a benefit of membership. The magazine—published six times annually—presents timely research, news and analysis of trends in the wildlife profession."

This magazine is your platform and members are encouraged to contribute. We really want your input. This input can be in the

form of of articles, photos, or as suggestions of what you want to see in the magazine. Personally, I would like to see more articles about the southwest from you, the section members.

As the Southwest Section representative on TWP's Editorial Advisory Board, I'd like to hear from you directly on what you would like to see in future magazines, any concerns you may have, and of course what you like as well. If you'd like to discuss your thoughts, call or email me (contact information is on page 22). Know that you can also contact Keith Norris directly with an article ready for submission or something you're considering writing. If you have one in the works and don't know where to send it, submissions should be sent to Keith at [knorris@wildlife.org](mailto:knorris@wildlife.org)

Look forward to hearing from you!



### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	30

# Southwest Section News



From the Board

Southwest Section

National News

State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News

## SWS Board & Committee Chairs

### Current Board

President: **Tad Theimer** [Tad.Theimer@nau.edu](mailto:Tad.Theimer@nau.edu) 928-523-8374

President-Elect: **Fidel Hernandez** [fidel.hernandez@tamuk.edu](mailto:fidel.hernandez@tamuk.edu) 361-593-3926

Past President: **Ginny Seamster** [virginia.seamster@state.nm.us](mailto:virginia.seamster@state.nm.us)

505-476-8111

Secretary: **Casey Cardinal** [casey.cardinal@state.nm.us](mailto:casey.cardinal@state.nm.us)

Treasurer: **Ryan O'Shaughnessy** [rosshaughnessy@sulross.edu](mailto:rosshaughnessy@sulross.edu) 432-837-8904

### Southwest Section Representative to TWS Council

**James Ramakka** [j\\_ramakka@msn.com](mailto:j_ramakka@msn.com) 505-486-2746

### Active Committees

Conservation Affairs:

**Romey Swanson** [romeyswanson@gmail.com](mailto:romeyswanson@gmail.com) 512-667-8124

Geospatial Advisory Committee:

**Leland Pierce** [leland.pierce@state.nm.us](mailto:leland.pierce@state.nm.us) 505-476-8094 &

**Ginny Seamster** [virginia.seamster@state.nm.us](mailto:virginia.seamster@state.nm.us) 505-476-8111

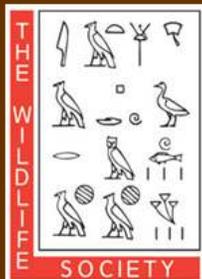
Newsletter:

**Jamie Killian** [7race13@gmail.com](mailto:7race13@gmail.com) 830-480-9043 &

**Misty Sumner** [mmissstyy@aol.com](mailto:mmissstyy@aol.com) 254-702-1869

Women of Wildlife Committee:

**Carol Chambers** [carol.chambers@nau.edu](mailto:carol.chambers@nau.edu) 928-523-0014



### Current Members

AZ	NM	TX	Int	Oth
72	70	104	2	39

# Southwest Section News



From the Board

**Southwest Section**

National News

State News

International News

Tribal News

Student Chapters

Council News

## Join!



### Membership Application

Membership Fee \$5.00

First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suffix
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Mailing Address

City	State	Zip Code	Country
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E-mail address	Phone
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Member Type (Please circle one):    Student        Regular        Retired

Please include this form with your payment and mail to: Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Treasurer, Southwest Section of TWS, Assistant Professor, PO Box C-16, Alpine TX 78932.

### Membership benefits for the Southwest Section TWS

- SWS TWS Newsletter
- Scholarship opportunities
- Section-level meetings and conferences
- Strengthen your connections to national TWS
- Peer connections through Listserv and [Facebook](#)
- Website information at <http://wildlife.org/sw-section/about/>



#### Current Members

AZ NM TX Int Oth  
72 70 104 2 39