



## Summer Newsletter

June 2021

### Note from the Chair

Dear HTCWG Members,

I hope this spring newsletter finds you and your families well. There is a great deal happening in many places as adjustments to Covid both in work and social settings continues to change. I wanted to just share some updates of our Work Grouping Group with you.

We have had several officers' conference calls and currently are active with several action items. Some of the things we acted on this past year:

1) We provided comments to TWS Council on correspondence related to the TWS Position Statement on Trapping. 2) We provided extensive comments on proposed TWS by-laws changes that would impact all working groups and general election of officers, as well as some operational procedures of TWS Council. 3) We have been active in helping the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies plan for offering "Trapping Matters Workshops" around the country. We will keep you updated as these events become "live" again as Covid protocols permit.

Our Working Group jointly sponsored a Workshop of lead and non-lead ammunition at the 2017 TWS Annual Conference. We are currently preparing to submit a symposium on ammunition types and use in wildlife harvest and impacts on wildlife and humans. John McDonald is coordinating this effort for the Working Group and he has three other Working Groups who are going to jointly sponsor this submission for a Symposium. State tuned for more information.

We now have a new Working Group logo, and Geriann Albers is working on plans for some clothing with our logo on it. Look for more information shortly. I hope everyone who is on social media follows our HTCWG Facebook page and thanks to Gabby Zaldumbide for the many postings she places up there. Also, thanks to Amanda Veals for her work in production of our newsletters.

If you have ideas that you would like us to consider for professional development work, information sharing, or certifications and training, please share your ideas with any officer.

I encourage you all to take up our Mentor Challenge that continues in collaboration with the National Shooting Sports Foundation ([MentorSignUp](#)). Please take some time and introduce others to learn to hunt, trap, fish, and appreciate wildlife for the many benefits they provide to all of us.

Enjoy the woods and waters this spring.  
Tom



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TWS Hunting, Trapping, and Conservation Working Group



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## Recovering America's Wildlife Act

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) was introduced today by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE).

The bill would dedicate \$1.3 billion annually to fund state fish and wildlife agencies to implement their science-based wildlife action plans and an additional \$97.5 million for tribal fish and wildlife managers to conserve fish and wildlife on tribal lands and waters.

States would receive an annual apportionment based on state size (50%), population (25%) and number of ESA-listed species(25%). The legislation states that these funds shall be used for/to:

- Conservation and restoration of wildlife and their habitat under existing conservation and recreation programs
- Recover and manage species of greatest conservation need and key habitats and plant communities
- Develop, revise, and implement Wildlife Action Plans
- Recovery of endangered or threatened species
- Recovery of State listed species

The legislation further states these funds may be used for/to:

- Wildlife conservation education
- Wildlife-associated recreation
- Manage Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and habitats with range shared across States/territories/Tribes or foreign governments
- Manage, control, and prevent:
  - Invasive species
  - Nuisance species
  - Disease
  - Other risks
- Law enforcement directly related to protection of SGCN and SGCN habitat

### Membership Corner: Fishing from a Duck Blind

One of the thrills of hunting is to expect the unexpected. Jacob Dykes, a PhD student at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, cast a frozen mullet out beside his decoys before sunrise. Midmorning the drag on his reel began to scream as a giant redfish took the bait. What began as a joke among friends turned into Jacob's personal record redfish.

*Do you have a hunting, trapping, or general field work story you want to share with fellow HTC members? Send them to Amanda Veals at [amveals@gmail.com](mailto:amveals@gmail.com) with subject line "HTC Membership Corner" to have your story featured in our next newsletter.*



## Symposium at TWS 2021: Lead Ammunition

Our working group is sponsoring a symposium on the issue of lead ammunition at the upcoming annual conference of The Wildlife Society. The current TWS position statement on lead in ammunition and fishing tackle is due to expire in 2022 and will likely be revised ahead of potential renewal. The existing position statement envisions the near total replacement of lead-based ammunition with non-lead alternatives in the future, but recognizes that it will take a collaborative approach among the many interested stakeholders and a phased regulatory approach. Any proposed revisions will likely generate a vigorous debate on the biological and sociological evidence of the effects of lead on wildlife populations and human health. Lead is the most commonly manufactured form of ammunition in the U.S. and the most commonly used by hunters where it is unrestricted. Many factors contribute to the adoption of non-lead ammunition by hunters, including cost of factory ammunition, low availability of non-lead ammunition (especially for .22 rimfire ammunition), perceptions of how non-lead ammunition performs relative to lead, fear of damage to firearms, anti-regulatory attitudes, and others. Some hunters have voluntarily adopted non-lead ammunition for a variety of reasons, including a desire to not consume lead or share meat potentially contaminated with lead. This symposium, sponsored by our Working Group and co-sponsored by the Wildlife Damage WG, Wildlife Disease WG, and Wildlife Toxicology WG, will pull together the most current available information on population level effects of lead ammunition on wildlife species as well as perspectives on the factors affecting ammunition choice by hunters, and way industry and wildlife agencies in the U.S. and abroad view the issue and the various approaches being used to promote non-lead ammunition use.

Symposia at this year's virtual TWS conference will be available on demand throughout the conference for all registered participants. Presentations will be prerecorded but there will be a live Q&A session, as well; as of now our time slot for that is unknown. We have 15 presentations in our symposium, with presenters from a wide range of perspectives: social scientists, wildlife health experts, outdoor writers, state agency leaders, shooting industry, wildlife damage managers, among others. We will also plan to present a video demonstration from a shooting range, comparing the performance of lead and non-lead ammunition in a variety of commonly used hunting calibers, in lieu of the ability to hold a hands on workshop. Presentations will discuss issues affecting hunter willingness to adopt non-lead ammunition, practical limitations of non-lead ammunition, strategies geared toward voluntary non-lead use, and the view of state fish and wildlife agencies on the road ahead. The symposium is intended to provide a base of current information for TWS members to use in discussions around any revisions to the position statement in the year ahead.

## Cochetopa Cottontails

By: Gabriela Zaldumbide

One of the reasons why I became a hunter was so I could source my own food. In the last two and a half years, I've had the pleasure of hosting many wild game dinners, adoring the opportunities to share my elk, venison or small game with friends.

Unsurprisingly, after attending some of these "family dinners," my friend Anna became interested in harvesting an animal herself. She had harvested a whitetail doe with her dad before in Alabama, but that was long ago. She was interested in the mentorship I had to offer. It being January, we decided a small game hunt was best, and I knew exactly where we were going.

Anna had to work at the Vail resort in Crested Butte the morning of our hunt, so we left Gunnison and headed south as soon as she got home in the early afternoon. We hadn't yet made it out of Cochetopa Canyon when we spotted a large bighorn ram in the middle of the road. His nearly full-curl horns shimmered gold in the sunlight bouncing off the snow. We slowed down and pulled over; 12 mature rams were feeding, pawing the grass free from under the snow just off the road. A handful of them decided it was time to snack on some sagebrush, and they climbed a vertical rock wall with ease. We couldn't believe our luck! No traffic, a bluebird afternoon and all the time in the world meant we felt like we could watch this bachelor herd forever. They didn't blink twice at us photographing and gaping at them from the windows of my RAV4.



Eventually, the fact that the sun was now descending dawned on us, and we decided to keep on moving towards my cottontail spot.

You can see the rabbit highways through the snow from the road. We parked in my favorite pull-off, right in front of a fence crossing, and post-holed into the willows. Fresh tracks, nibbled plants and tons of scat reassured me that, yes, the rabbits were still here. It was only a few minutes before we saw our first one. Not ready to shoot quite yet, Anna told me that I should get it. I put the rabbit in the scope of my .22 and pulled the trigger.

"Anna, you should go see if she's dead," I said, knowing the rabbit was, in fact, very dead.

She slowly walked up to the rabbit, its fur blowing softly in the breeze. She cupped its body in her hands. "I can't believe how soft she is."

## Cochetopa Cottontails

“Do you feel ready to shoot the next one?” I asked.

“I think so.”



It didn't take long to see the next one, either. Hidden in the lowest branches of a willow was a small, young cottontail. We moved a little closer, looking for a better shot, and the rabbit spooked. The willow it was under was so large, it simply ran to the other side. We couldn't see it anymore.

“Anna, you stay down there! I'm going to climb up this hill and spook him back towards you,” I said.

It worked. I waded up the small hillside, gaining access to the other side of the tree, and found the little rabbit again. I jumped towards him, running him back down the hill.

“I see him!” Anna shouted.

“Shoot him!” I shouted right back.

She raised my rifle and got him in the scope. There was a loud bang, and right after, “I got him!”

I tromped back down the hill, my boots filling with snow. I turned around to a beaming Anna; she had a stick in her hair, my rifle in her right hand and her first cottontail in the other. Agreeing that it was getting cold and dark, we headed back to my car, cottontails in hand. We had a quiet car ride home as we watched the sun set behind the mountains, the sky turn a velvety lavender and a big muley buck feed with a doe outside of town.

We made quick work skinning and cleaning the rabbits on my dining room table. We kept both of our hides, and now we have matching brain-tanned parka ruffs. We felt pretty cool walking into our graduate school classes together donning our new and improved jackets.

For the next family dinner, we had rabbit with mustard sauce. Anna cooked up her first cottontail herself; frying it until it browned, cooking down the sauce and dishing everyone up. I know that for her, feelings from our afternoon together resurfaced during dinner. I don't think she stopped smiling once. She's less inclined to go to the grocery store for meat again, too. Why would you when you can get fresh rabbit down the canyon?

## Conservation Leader for Tomorrow During Covid-19 and Beyond

By: Zach Lowe

Like so many of us 2020 and 2021 was a year for uncertainty, adaptation, and unknowns and the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation's Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow program (CLfT), was no different. Heading into our 15th year of delivering highly successful face-to-face workshops focused on the role of hunting in wildlife conservation meant that our time-tested methodologies and curriculum needed to evolve to the circumstances of the health crisis.



Early 2020 brought a long-awaited strategic review of the programs goals, objectives, and curriculum planning. This resulted in a refreshed and fully updated curriculum that built from the collective experience of 2347 participants enrolled in 148 workshops (93 University and 62 Professional) since 2005. The longterm evaluation of these experiences and the regular inclusion of recent wildlife science and policy expedited McGraw's launch into two new virtual products.



In July of 2020, the CLfT staff created an online program for students called Hunting for Conservation- Online for use on university campuses and as a standalone, independent study program for interested college students. This transformed the classroom portions of CLfT Workshops into a "virtual textbook" being independently useful to both professors and students. This has been met with good initial results with approximately 100 students completing Hunting for Conservation – Online this "season". We see great promise in this effort as it helps achieve a longtime goal of making the academic portions of the CLfT curriculum readily accessible to more students at much lower costs.

In October 2020, the CLfT staff created a new online program titled Conservation & Hunting in America (C&HA). This new program was developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and provided an alternative to the in-person workshops which were postponed in 2020/2021. The first of sixteen C&HA cohorts was conducted in February with all cohorts completed by the end of May, producing approximately 200 graduates from over 30 states. Most notable is that new program helps us reach new and different audiences beyond what we had through traditional CLfT Workshops.

Initial feedback from participants and agency directors has been largely positive and supportive of the program content, delivery, and McGraw's ability to adapt to the circumstances. Some have stated a desire to "get back to face-to-face programs" and many others are eager to have "both virtual and face-to-face programs available" to address a broader set of leadership training needs. Moving forward we are hopeful to get back to in-person trainings by next winter and we plan to continue to offer and fully support our new virtual training options in an effort to bring conservation trainings to wherever people need it most.

## About Us

Webpage: <https://wildlife.org/htcwg/>

### Officers – 2021-2022

Chair: Tom Decker  
(thomas\_decker@fws.gov)

Chair-Elect: Geriann Albers  
(geriann.albers@gmail.com)

Past Chair: Michael Cherry  
(Michael.Cherry@tamuk.edu)

Secretary/Treasurer: Pat Jackson  
(pjackson@ndow.org)

Board Member: John Kilgo  
(john.kilgo@usda.gov)

Board Member: John McDonald  
(jemcdonald@westfield.ma.edu)

Membership: 257

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## Black Bear Den Visit

By: Samuel Moore

Research and management of furbearers all over the country is supported by funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program. A new video takes viewers on a research visit to a black bear den with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and shows how this funding -- from excise taxes on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment -- helps state agencies study and manage growing populations of the species. The short video was produced by the Partner with a Payer initiative, in collaboration with the NSSF, ATA and AFWA, and is part of a series of videos that highlight the long and successful partnerships among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state fish and wildlife agencies, and firearms, ammunition and archery manufacturers.



Watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tdKJSRAi7I>

