

The Wildlife Society

SOUTHEASTERN SECTION



SEPTEMBER 2024 VOLUME 66, NUMBER 3
KATHERINE EDWARDS, EDITOR

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Hello SETWS members. Before discussing SETWS activities, I wanted to begin by expressing my deepest condolences to those who have been impacted by Hurricane Helene. The effects from this storm were immense and widespread. Many people have suffered total loss and devastation. I have been through several major hurricanes and experienced and witnessed the destruction these storms can do to our properties, possessions, and to ourselves, physically and emotionally. Recovery efforts will take a long time. If you are able to help those in need, in any capacity, please do so.

It is officially Fall, and many of our members are finally getting relief from a hot, dry summer! Students are settled into their classes, and several state chapters recently hosted their fall meetings. It is almost October, which is my favorite month. Flowers are blooming and butterflies and birds are well into their fall migration. Here in Mississippi, I tend to see Monarch Butterflies peaking in early October, and I've aptly scheduled fieldwork during this time! For migrating birds, one of my favorite evening activities is to sit outside and watch and listen to the turnover. In late August and early September, wood thrush left the forest interior, and approximately a dozen individuals moved into my yard, taking advantage of new food resources in the open canopy. For the last 2 weeks, Acadian flycatchers have been one of the most abundant birds on my street. And two days ago (September 26), I had 18 Common Nighthawks flying over, all headed due south. This is the latest I have seen Common Nighthawks here, which typically fly over my house during the first 2 weeks of September, often in the hundreds each evening.

Beyond the great wildlife viewing opportunities, we have an incredible series of events on the schedule! First, the SEAFWA conference is only a couple of weeks away, and will be held in Augusta, GA on October 12-14, 2024. The Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society (SETWS) Executive Board will hold their quarterly board meeting October 9 prior to the conference. Then, at SEAFWA, the Annual Members Meeting will be held Tuesday, October 15th from 8-10 AM. There, we will discuss annual progress for our SETWS and SETWS-SEAFWA joint committees, including anticipated vacancies. Prior to the conference, we will send a link to membership for virtual attendance.

Speaking of committees, recently, **Dr. Angela Larsen** agreed to serve as the chair of the SE Section Conservation Affairs Committee, replacing **Lisa Lord**, who served in that position since 2019. Lisa, thank you so much for your dedication and commitment to this role, and Angie, for agreeing to chair this committee! Additionally, earlier this year, **Steve Shea** announced he will step down as Chair of the Deer

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Committee of the SETWS, after serving three, 3-year terms! Steve, thank you for your dedication to this committee, which we know can be very time consuming. Steve will continue to serve in this role until the 48th Annual Southeast Deer Study Group Meeting, which will be hosted by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife in February 2025. Thereafter, Steve will continue to serve as a committee member, and **Dr. Gino D'Angelo**, Chair-Elect, will chair this committee. Gino, thank you for accepting the nomination and congratulations!

Second, The Wildlife Society's 31st Annual Conference will be held in Baltimore, MD from October 19-23, 2024. There are numerous opportunities to gain experience with how TWS functions at all levels. In addition to presentation and poster sessions, I encourage each of you to go to a working group meeting, quiz bowl, or social event. Meet new people and grow your professional network!

Third, students and TWS Student Chapter Advisors, please mark your calendars! The Southeastern Section's student conclave will be hosted by the University of Tennessee, Martin from March 27-29, 2025. **Dr. Eric Pelren**, professor of wildlife biology, and his team will lead this event. For those that are new to conclaves or need a refresher on how amazing this experience is for our student chapters, check out this video **Dr. Andrea Darracq** shared covering their 2024 event: <https://youtu.be/S76GQNCPOh8>.

I look forward to seeing many of you at one of these great events! As always, please do not hesitate to contact me or the other board members with suggestions or ideas on how the Section can better serve its membership!

Dan Greene, President, Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society



Brandon Trentler/FLICKR

SECTION REPRESENTATIVE

SOUTHEASTERN SECTION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Thank you for your support and I am very excited to start my second term as your Southeastern Representative to Council. I look forward to continuing working on your behalf and making sure your voices are heard at TWS. Time keeps going faster and not sure how the summer flew by, but excited to see many of you this fall in Augusta, Georgia for SEAFWA or in Baltimore for TWS meetings.

When you log into the TWS website at wildlife.org, you can find the Strategic Plan (effective July 1, 2024) and background information under Resources/Strategic Plan. This plan is a living document and focused on 3 goals, 1) building community, 2) supporting professionals, and 3) exercising external influence. These goals are designed to direct TWS well beyond 5 years and address the core values of the organization. There are many efforts already happening to implement the strategic plan and move the ideas forward, including hiring new personnel.

There are 3 new staff members to replace recent vacancies and address the organizational goals. **Megan Radke** was hired to promote TWS Sections, Chapters, and TWS policy work. She will be writing articles for the website and the *Wildlife Professional* to highlight ongoing work. **Katie Perkins** will oversee TWS social media, and **Christy Plumer** has joined as a government affairs contractor. Her background as the Chief Conservation Officer for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership with expertise in policy and conservation will help promote external influence for TWS.

It is an exciting time to get involved with TWS. I hope to see you soon.

Lisa Muller
***Southeastern Section Representative
to TWS Council***

78th Annual Conference

SEAFWA

October 12-16, 2024
Augusta, GA

 **GEORGIA**
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



COMMITTEE REPORTS

STUDENT AWARDS COMMITTEE

Student Poster/Presentation Judges Needed

Annually, during the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Conference, the Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society recognizes the Best Student Oral Presentation and Best Student Poster in the Wildlife Technical Sessions. In order to make that happen, we rely upon professionals to judge the presentations and posters. I am requesting help for judging the student presentations and posters in the Wildlife Technical Sessions at the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Conference being held in Augusta, Georgia, in a few weeks. You are not required to judge every presentation and poster, only the sessions you would like to attend. In order to be a judge, you must be a wildlife professional and not a student. If you are willing to help, please contact me at amadison@uu.edu or text me at 731-694-5734.

Andy Madison, amadison@uu.edu

CONSERVATION ACCESS, RELEVANCY, AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Conservation Access, Relevancy and Engagement (C.A.R.E.) Committee formerly known as Minorities in Natural Resources Conservation (MINRC) Committee has undergone a name change selected by the committee in May 2024. This name change is a working title that will be presented during the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) for final approval in October 2024. Even with this name change we are still committed to our work of engaging broader audiences in conservation. Beyond the change in title the committee is working diligently to plan for the 2024 SEAFWA

Annual Conference in Augusta, Georgia this year. This year the committee was able to sponsor 23 students from across 13 state and territories in the Southeastern US to join our fellowship.

In our typical fashion, we will be hosting a student workshop for the students selected for the C.A.R.E. fellowship and the professional workshop for the larger conference to attend. The student workshop will be to help the students not only gain but develop skills relevant to applying for jobs, networking, C.V. and cover letter writing but are not limited to these skills. To get a head start, an extremely successful virtual orientation was held September 27th which focused on some of these skills including the professionalism and elevator speeches.

The professional Workshop will focus on Relevancy and developing workforces for tomorrow's conservation Leaders. The workshop on October 14th, is open to all and will include names such as **Nick Wiley** - Duck Unlimited, **Mike Worley** - Georgia Wildlife Federation, **Dr. Jessica McGuire** - Pheasants Forever, and **Carol Minchey** - Academics Afield and **Justin Grider** from AL Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources. We look forward to seeing you all there!

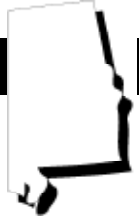
Visit the [SEAFWA website](#) to see a full agenda of the workshops.

To keep up to date on C.A.R.E. news, jobs, and events throughout the south-east, please follow us on social media. You can find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

Amaad Blades
amaad.blades@dnr.ga.gov

STATE REPORTS

ALABAMA



ACTWS Annual Conference

The Alabama Chapter TWS Annual Conference was held from July 23-25 at the Alabama Wildlife Federation's Nature Center in Millbrook, AL. The 2024 conference theme, "Tracking and Conserving Alabama's Wildlife Together," highlighted techniques, new technologies, and collaborative conservation. Invited speaker **Leopoldo "Leo" Miranda-Castro** of [Conservation without Conflict](#) kicked off the meeting with an inspiring program on the importance of collaboration and relationship-building for species conservation. Following Leo's charge, additional invited speakers covered a variety of innovative wildlife tracking projects, from Eastern woodcock and eagle migration to monitoring red-cockaded woodpeckers via passive integrated transponders (PIT). Day One ended with a Montgomery Biscuits baseball game for networking and socializing.

Day Two started with agency updates and the business meeting. All agencies, organizations, and universities attending provided brief introductions and updates. The annual business meeting included the annual financial report, committee updates, and a discussion on election nominations. New business included announcing an ACTWS logo design contest and reviewing and auditing the 2025 bylaws.

After lunch, we enjoyed 19 technical presentations and posters by students and professionals highlighting their current wildlife research on various species and subjects. In addition to the technical presentations, we rounded out the invited

speakers with **Kelly O'Conner** with The Wildlife Society presenting on the Conservation Advisory Network and **Hannah Golden** presenting on the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society.



Mercedes Maddox (ACTWS Chapter President) leading the agency updates at the 2024 ACTWS Conference.



Hannah Golden presenting on the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society.

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An awards banquet, professional-student mixer, and social were held at the Alabama Nature Center. **Chris Cook**, who recently retired from an impactful career with the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, was recognized by his peers with the ACTWS Lifetime Achievement Award. **Jonathan Stober** with the US Forest Service was recognized by his peers with the 2024 ACTWS Biologist of the Year Award. Students were awarded for poster and technical presentations. **Shelby Davis**, Auburn University, won the poster presentation for her project, “Public Knowledge of and Interactions with the Alligator Snapping Turtle.” **Krista Rupert**, Mississippi State University, won the technical presentation award for her research on “Post-Breeding Movements of Gopher Frogs on the Conecuh National Forest.” The heated silent auction raised \$1,033, a chapter record. Thanks to all who donated items and ran up the bids!



Chris Cook (center) receiving the ACTWS Lifetime Achievement Award with **Jeff Baker** (ACTWS Treasurer/Awards Committee Chair, left) and **Mercedes Maddox** (ACTWS Chapter President, right).



Jonathan Stober (center) receiving the ACTWS Biologist of the Year Award with **Jeff Baker** (ACTWS Treasurer/Awards Committee Chair, left) and **Mercedes Maddox** (ACTWS Chapter President, right).



Krista Rupert (Student Presentation Award winner; left) presenting her research on “Post-Breeding Movements of Gopher Frogs on the Conecuh National Forest.”

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Day Three of the conference included concurrent field techniques workshops for professional development. [Alabama Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation](#) offered a program on herpetofauna conservation techniques, including trapping. [Motus Wildlife Tracking](#) and [the Steury Lab](#) at Auburn University offered a program on wildlife tracking for both small and large animals, including radio-telemetry and the Motus network.

During this conference, the chapter provided the most travel grants it has ever given. We gave travel grants to 10 students and one retiree and waived registration for an additional 14 students.

The following sponsors made the meeting and travel grants possible.

Gold sponsors:

- [College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Environment at Auburn University](#)
- [Alabama Treasure Forest Association](#)
- [Alabama Power](#)

Silver sponsors:

- [Alabama Wildlife Federation](#)
- [Alabama Forestry Foundation](#)

Bronze sponsor:

- [Westervelt Wildlife Services](#)

Additional meeting information can be [found here](#). We look forward to seeing everyone in 2025!

Derek Colbert, derek.s.colbert@usda.gov



Field techniques workshop for professionals presented by Motus Wildlife Tracking and the Steury Lab at Auburn University.

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ARKANSAS



Arkansas Chapter TWS

Dr. Robert Wiley, a mammalogist that taught at the University of Arkansas at Monticello until 2002 passed away on July 29th. He was a charter member of the Arkansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society and served as Secretary-Treasurer in 1979-1980.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Steve Burgess, one of the Commission's Habitat Biologists, was named as the Wildlife Management Division Employee of the Year for 2024 and **Cindy Kidd**, Wildlife Management

Technician, received a Special Recognition Award. **Luke Lewis** recently retired as Assistant Chief of the Wildlife Management Division and two new Assistant Chief's began work in August; **Stacey Clark** and **David Luker**. **David Moscicki**, Turkey Program Coordinator, successfully defended his PhD dissertation at North Carolina State University. David worked under the direction of **Dr. Christopher E. Moorman** and **Dr. Krishna Pacifici** to lead a project titled: A Multi-scale Assessment of Wild Turkey Ecology in North Carolina. Recent new hires include **Ethan Lunn**, Habitat Biologist in the Jonesboro office, **Kaley Cain**, Wetland Habitat Biologist, and **Will Camplain**, Wildlife Technician in the Russellville office.

Blake Sasse, blake.sasse@agfc.ar.gov



Vicki DeLoach/FLICKR

STATE REPORTS

FLORIDA



Florida Chapter TWS

Every other month for over a year now, the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society has been hosting Zoom meeting lunchtime “socials” called “Wildlife Connections”.

The Chapter’s goal for these meetings is to provide an opportunity to foster connections among wildlife professionals, creating a casual online gathering where we can get to know each other better, share our work experiences, and exchange some exciting happenings from the field.

The format has been a presentation by a wildlife professional, followed by Questions and Answers, and then the meeting is opened for general discussion, whether it be the topic at hand or any other topic.

We have had some amazing guest speakers and subjects including **Dr. Paul Moler** on “Charismatic Microfauna”; **Shawnlie Breeding** from Audubon on their EagleWatch program; **Larry Perrin** for a “Storytime Session”; **Jodi Slater** from the St. Johns River Water Management District on their Lake Apopka restoration work; **Jay Exum** on the “Future makeup and focus of the wildlife profession”, **Lisa Smith** on “From Steppes to Saddles: Mongolia’s Wildlife, Culture, and the Challenge of the Mongol Derby”; and next month, we are excited to hear from **Cathy Ricketts** with The Nature Conservancy on “A Crowning Moment for the Emperor: Restoration and Reproduction of Eastern Indigo Snakes.”

We are always looking for future speakers, success stories to share, amusing field mishaps that we can laugh about, or incredible wildlife-oriented travel experiences to inspire; these socials are the ideal platform to connect and learn from one another.

We encourage members to bring their enthusiasm and passion for wildlife on this journey of discovery and camaraderie. During these virtual socials, we strive for a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere where we can openly discuss wildlife-related topics, ask questions, and engage in insightful conversations. It’s a chance to forge new friendships, collaborate on potential projects, and gain valuable insights from fellow wildlife professionals.

We hope that we can share our knowledge, experiences, and love for wildlife as we create and strengthen our network, deepen our understanding of wildlife conservation, and make a positive impact in our field!

Larame Ferry, larameferry@gmail.com



STATE REPORTS

GEORGIA



Georgia Chapter TWS

The Georgia Chapter of The Wildlife Society's Annual Meeting was held February 22-23, 2024 in Dahlonega, Georgia at the University of North Georgia. There were over 100 attendees, with 20 oral presentations and 18 poster presentations. Field trip options included a diversity-equity-inclusion focused field trip at the Smithgall Woods State Park & Hardman Farm/Sautee Nacoochee, R studio workshop, and fish hatchery tour in Suches, GA. Next year's meeting is currently being planned but will be at the end of February. More information coming soon!

University of Georgia

My name is **Carson Daniel** - I am an urban wildlife extension assistant with the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. Recently, my team and I have worked on various types of media content to launch my research on urban coyotes in Atlanta using specialized LOTEK camera collars. These collars take up to 40 hours of video each, and we have compiled that into a few montages to draw interest to our research and findings. Since our initial post, this research has gained national media attention with the publication of 20+ articles and a news channel story.

The objectives of this research are to determine diel activities of urban coyotes, understand the difference between anthropogenic and natural food consumption, and to use the videos as a tool for citizen engagement and outreach. This research is currently in progress, and we plan to have finalized findings in early 2025.



I thought that the TWS team might find this interesting and entertaining to watch. Hope you enjoy it! Down below are all links to the posts and our website and YouTube.

Press Release from UGA:

<https://news.uga.edu/coyotes-are-everywhere/>

Facebook:

https://fb.watch/tQxIGC_4Gn/

<https://fb.watch/tQxgi5MkiU/>

Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/C-F_6o8RuuA/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

https://www.instagram.com/reel/C-YUhGexqpV/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

Wildlife Atlanta's YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@WildlifeAtlanta>

Wildlife Atlanta Website:

<https://wildlfeatlanta.org/>

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University of Georgia Student Chapter

The Wildlife Society at UGA is a pre-professional club aimed to help students build their professionalism in the wildlife industry and spark passion and interest in wildlife. We have 3 big "events" planned every year, which include the National Conference, Conclave, and the Wildlife Supper. Our wildlife supper includes a variety of meat and sides for people to try and offers a big gathering for alumni, families, professors, and students through raffles and prizes. We also have small "field trips" planned throughout the semester, which include herping, touring a deer barn, and nature walks. We also try to provide small workshops to help students gain field knowledge and experience. This semester we are also participating in the TWS BioBlitz Competition. One of our student members, **Phillip Salzinger** won a prize for the most individual observations in the month of August. Our chapter is dedicated to helping students thrive in the wildlife and natural resources industry.

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Student Chapter

The ABAC Wildlife Society recently participated in the 2024 Southeastern Wildlife Society Conclave, held at Murray State University. Our team achieved notable success, securing 2nd place overall, 2nd place in Team Competition, 4th place in Quiz Bowl, and several high placements in individual events. This strong performance marks a promising start for the 2024-2025 academic year, which began with over 60 attendees at our initial meeting. We are eager to build on this momentum with a series of engaging meetings featuring a diverse lineup of guest speakers.

Upcoming Guest Speakers:

- Paradise Public Fishing Area, (GADNR)
- **Zachary Stevens**, Deer Management Assistance Program (GADNR)
- **Kalyn Hansford**, Quail Forever
- **Alyssa Wood** and Hailey Martin, United States Department of Defense
- **Lucius Harvard**, Wildlife Services

Our chapter is also preparing to attend the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies conference in Augusta, Georgia. This event presents an excellent opportunity for networking, which could benefit our members in terms of future job prospects or advanced academic opportunities.

Additionally, we will support the Paradise Public Fishing Area's JAKES Day, an environmental education event held in Berrien County. This event will feature a range of activities for children of various ages, including fishing, a shotgun station, and an archery station. Numerous exhibitors from various natural resource departments will be present to engage with attendees.

Jessy Patterson; jrpatterson@ung.edu



Diana Roberts/Pixabay

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KENTUCKY



Kentucky Chapter TWS

The Chapter organized two trainings programs in September to occur at the University of Kentucky's Robinson Forest. The first training program was an all-day chainsaw course specifically designed for students in the chapter. The course covered the basics of chainsaw safety and PPE, use and maintenance, basic cutting strategies, and a hands-on component of using the saws and practicing what you learned. Emphasis was placed on time outside the classroom. The chainsaw course was the Chapter's first go at trying to reach the direct needs of its student membership. With that in mind, the Chapter helped offset the cost of the course and provided housing the night before and after the course as well as lunch during the day. The second training program was open to all members of the Chapter and focused on the theme "Forest Management Strategies for Wildlife". The program included instruction on invasive species control, silviculture prescriptions, and provided a tour of some of the previous and current projects on-going at Robinson Forest.

Eastern Kentucky University Student Chapter

Students in the Chapter and faculty advisors **Drs. David Brown** and **Luke Dodd** prepared and administered the Wildlife Career Development Event (CDE) Exam to FFA students at the Kentucky State Fair. This was the 4th year the chapter was involved in the event; this year over 65 students from 17 high schools were involved in the event.

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR)

As part of the international Motus collaborative network, KDFWR has installed four tracking stations across the state. The primary goal of the tracking station located in the Daniel Boone National Forest's Cumberland District is to track tagged wood thrushes. The wood thrush has been designated as a species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) in Kentucky's Wildlife Action Plan. Researchers hope to use the Motus system to learn more about wood thrush migration patterns between breeding and nonbreeding ranges.

Chuck Elliott, charles.elliott@eku.edu



Andy Reago and Chrissy McClarren/FLICKR

LOUISIANA

NO NEWS REPORTED

MARYLAND/DELAWARE

NO NEWS REPORTED



STATE REPORTS

THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY'S CONSERVATION AFFAIRS NETWORK

The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network (CAN) supports communication, collaboration, and coordination on policy engagement across our Chapters, Sections, Working Groups, and TWS headquarters. Establishing better connections among the individual units of TWS is part of a larger strategic effort that will propel our entire Society into the future as a stronger organization and make each of us more effective at achieving our mission. Wildlife professionals now have an effective method for bringing their valuable and crucial perspectives into the policy process, to the betterment of wildlife conservation. The monthly CAN Newsletter highlights policy issues occurring at local, regional, and national levels, and provides opportunities for wildlife professionals to engage with those issues. View the September 2024 CAN Newsletter at <https://wildlife.org/conservation-affairs-network/>.

MISSISSIPPI

NO NEWS REPORTED



NORTH CAROLINA

NO NEWS REPORTED



OKLAHOMA

NO NEWS REPORTED



SOUTH CAROLINA



Rat poison is moving up through food chains, threatening carnivores around the world

Rats thrive around humans, for good reason: They feed off crops and garbage and readily adapt to many settings, from farms to [the world's largest cities](#). To control them, people often resort to poisons. But chemicals that kill rats can also harm other animals.

The most commonly used poisons are called anticoagulant rodenticides. They work by interfering with blood clotting in animals that consume them. These enticingly flavored bait blocks are placed outside of buildings, in small black boxes that only rats and mice can enter. But the poison remains in the rodents' bodies, threatening larger animals that prey on them.

This mountain lion, known as P-47, was found dead in Southern California on March 21, 2019, with rat poison in his system ([National Park Service via AP](#)).

My colleagues and I recently [reviewed studies from around the world](#) that sought to document wild mammal carnivores' exposure to anticoagulant rodenticides. Many animals tested in these studies were already dead; others were alive and a part of other studies.

Researchers detected rodenticides in about one-third of the animals in these analyses, including bobcats, foxes and weasels. They directly linked the poisons to the deaths of one-third of the deceased animals – typically, by finding the chemicals in the animals' liver tissues.

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Most poisons that these studies detected were so-called second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides, developed since 1970. These products are used exclusively in residential and urban areas and can kill a rat or mouse [after just one night's feeding](#). First-generation rodenticides, which typically are used only on farms, require several doses to kill.

These poisons are widely available, and their use is largely unregulated in most countries. Using rodenticides is [projected to increase](#) and may be contributing to declines in many carnivore species around the world.

Flaco, a Eurasian eagle-owl, escaped from New York City's Central Park Zoo in 2023 and lived in the park for more than a year. Rat poisons in his system may have contributed to Flaco's death in 2024.

Rising through food chains

When wild animals consume rat poison – typically, by eating a poisoned rat – the effects may include internal bleeding and lesions, lethargy and a reduced immune response, which can make them more susceptible to other diseases. In many cases the animal will die. Sometimes these deaths occur at scales large enough to [reduce local predator populations](#).

We began our review by compiling a list of 34 species known to be exposed to rat poisons. They included members of the weasel and dog families, such as stoats, western polecats and red foxes, along with wild cats and other carnivores.

Some of these predators, such as mountain lions and gray wolves, don't usually hunt rodents. Rodenticides have even been detected in semi-aquatic predators such as river otters, which normally eat crustaceans and fish.

It's likely that large carnivores such as wolves are consuming rat poison by [eating other poisoned carnivores, such as raccoons and bobcats](#).

Among carnivores studied by the U.S. National Park Service post-mortem, the vast majority have tested positive for rat poison exposure ([Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)).

This movement of poisons up the food chain is called bioaccumulation. In the best-known example, bald eagles and other birds of prey were [exposed to the pesticide DDT](#) in fish they consumed before the U.S. banned DDT in 1972. Many affected species, including [bald eagles](#), [ospreys](#) and [peregrine falcons](#), were drastically reduced for years due to the effects of DDT on their populations.

Carnivores at risk

We found dozens of previous studies that attempted to quantify exposure risk, usually by examining animals' habitats. Some studies found an elevated risk of consuming rat poison in urban and agricultural areas, but many also found a high correlation with natural spaces.

For example, a 2012 study found rodenticides in [fishers and martens](#) that spent time near [illegal cannabis growing sites in Humboldt County, California](#), where growers were protecting their fields with rat poisons.

Other potential contributors to exposure included the animal's sex and age. All in all, understanding which animals are at risk requires more study.

Most research on this topic is being conducted in North America and Europe. Only a handful of studies to date have focused on South Africa, New Zealand or Australia, although over half of all carnivore species of global concern are found in [Asia, Africa or South America](#).

STATE REPORTS

In Africa, for example, anticoagulant rat poisons could threaten species such as the [black-footed cat](#), which is classified as vulnerable. These poisons are also widely used across Asia, particularly at palm oil plantations. Many wild species live in this type of forested agricultural area, including carnivores that hunt rodents, such as [common palm civets](#) and [leopard cats](#).

Our study found that 19% of carnivore species on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's [Red List of threatened species](#) have ranges that overlap entirely or partially with countries where rat poison exposure has been documented in wildlife. However, only 2% of Red List species list rodenticides as a recognized threat, and none are included in the 19% that our review indicates may be threatened by rodenticide exposure. This suggests that wildlife researchers and conservationists are not fully aware of the reach of these poisons.

Kiawah bobcats

I am doing my dissertation research on South Carolina's Kiawah Island, where biologists have [detected anticoagulant rodenticides in bobcats](#). The island's bobcats have been GPS-collared and monitored since the early 2000s in one of the longest multi-generational studies of a carnivore in the world.

Researchers studying Kiawah's bobcats take measurements and blood samples, check the animals for parasites and fit them with microchips and GPS collars. All animals are handled with proper permitting (Meghan P. Keating/Clemson University, [CCBY-ND](#)).

In late 2019 and early 2020, three bobcats were found dead due to rodenticide poisoning, including two females that died while giving birth. The bobcat population dropped from an estimated 30 to as few as 10 individual cats. These deaths attracted media attention, spurred efforts to [curtail use of poisons on the island](#) and kick-started research to understand how rat poisons were affecting bobcats.



Kiawah is a popular resort destination, but these bobcats have persisted through decades of housing development. Part of my work seeks to tease apart how rodenticides and urbanization are affecting the cats.

In 2020, Kiawah residents volunteered to stop using rodenticides on the island, and the town government carried out public education campaigns explaining the threat to wildlife. Today there are about 20 bobcats on the island, and work continues to [end use of rodenticides](#).

These poisons have contributed to the deaths of other charismatic animals, including [urban mountain lions](#) in Southern California and [Flaco, a Eurasian eagle-owl](#) who escaped from New York City's Central Park Zoo and lived for months in the park. In Europe, rodenticides have been found in the [carcasses of Italian wolves](#).

City cleanup campaigns, like this one in London, can help control rat populations ([Mark Kerrison/In Pictures via Getty Images](#)).

Rats damage property, contaminate food and spread diseases, so controlling them is a human health concern. However, my research adds to evidence that better control methods are needed to reduce the need for anticoagulant rodenticides.

STATE REPORTS

Community-level efforts like those on Kiawah Island can help. So [can cleaning up trash in cities](#). But better regulation and tracking of rat poison use is likely to be needed in many places around the world.

[Meghan P. Keating](#), *PhD Candidate in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology*, [Clemson University](#)

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)

SCDNR biologist recognized as Recovery Champion for work on rare marsh bird

When biologist **Christy Hand** first came to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) in 2011, she had never heard of the black rail; almost no one in South Carolina had.

Understanding the rare, disappearing marsh bird quickly became one of the centerpieces of her career – and in time, she established one of the country’s foremost research and conservation programs for black rails.

Now, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has honored her work with a [2023 Recovery Champion award](#). Each year, the [Service recognizes employees and partners](#) for outstanding efforts to conserve and protect endangered and threatened species of fish, wildlife, and plants. Hand is this year’s Southeast Region Champion, about whom the Service wrote the following:

“For nearly a decade, Christy Hand has been at the forefront of conservation and recovery efforts for the federally threatened eastern black rail, conducting cutting-edge research, designing and implementing comprehensive monitoring programs, informing habitat restoration initiatives, and increasing public awareness among many other activities. Hand’s research on the breeding

ecology and molt phenology of the rail in South Carolina has filled critical knowledge gaps for the subspecies and developed methodologies that are now the standard of research.”

The Eastern black rail is a dark, sparrow-sized marsh bird that inhabits coastal states from New Jersey to Texas, as well as inland in Colorado. Historically, the species was far more widespread – but habitat loss and other threats have dramatically reduced its population. In 2020, the Service listed the Eastern black rail as federally threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Coastal South Carolina remains a bright spot for the species in the Southeast, but Hand’s pioneering research has shown just how precarious that position is. In 2021, her team [published findings from a camera trap study](#) that identified that molting, when the birds grow new feathers and temporarily become flightless, coincides with hurricane season. As coastal storm and flooding events become increasingly frequent and severe, molting presents an especially vulnerable time of year for black rails.

With the knowledge gained from their camera trap work, Hand and her team have now begun to test different ways to manage habitat for black rails on both public and private lands.

Fortunately, Hand is no longer alone in her efforts to understand and protect these elusive marsh birds. Thanks in large part to her work, the species is familiar to far more South Carolinians these days, many of whom have become passionate advocates for the bird. A new working group led by Hand, [South Carolina Black Rails](#), has begun mobilizing the energy of a team of public and private organizations and people who are dedicated to black rail conservation in the state.

STATE REPORTS

“Any species would be lucky to have **Christy Hand** as an advocate in its corner,” said **Morgan Wolf**, fish and wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Ecological Services Recovery Planning Team. “She has a unique ability to build consensus and buy-in for the eastern black rail from a variety of stakeholders by exemplifying humility, capability, resilience, and kindness.”

Jamie Dozier, DozierJ@dnr.sc.gov

TENNESSEE



Tennessee Chapter TWS

The TN-Chapter of The Wildlife Society has recently updated its bylaws, which had not been revised since 1990. The Executive Board spearheaded this effort, engaging regularly with the chapter membership. Additionally, the Executive Board has announced that the 2025 annual meeting will be held at Camp Margaritaville RV Resort & Lodge in Pigeon Forge, TN, from March 5-7, 2025. For lodging reservations, please call (865) 868-9300 by January 1, 2025, and reference the "TN-Chapter of The Wildlife Society" to secure the discounted rate.

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)

TWRA completed compiling statistics from the state’s 2024 spring wild turkey hunting season. The total reported harvest was 31,647, a 1 percent decrease from 2023 and a 5 percent decrease over the previous 5-year average. The 2025 spring turkey season will be held April 12 – May 25.

Partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, TWRA will improve 3,500 acres of bottomland hardwood forest on seven Wildlife Management Areas: Moss Island, Tumbleweed, Eagle Lake Refuge, John Tully, Thorny Cypress, Ernest Rice,

and Reelfoot. Removing undesirable tree species and thinning the forest to make room for desirable ones, will restore forest health, ensure habitat for threatened and endangered species, and provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the community.

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC)

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation has designated State Director of Conservation Programs **Roger McCoy** with the honorary State Naturalist title, the third person ever to hold the title in the state. The honorary title is given to a TDEC staff member who displays a wealth of knowledge and a special ability to share an appreciation of Tennessee’s natural resources with the public. It recognizes the experience, expertise, and commitment of an employee who advances conservation stewardship within the department and beyond our boundaries.

USFWS

In partnership with Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, the Service will enhance more than 8,500 acres of bottomland hardwood forests across the West TN Refuge complex by planting new trees and selective forest thinning. This will increase the climate resiliency of the bottomland forest habitats. These improved forests will benefit wildlife, including threatened and endangered species and provide more outdoor recreational opportunities for local communities. Thus far, the Service has underplanted 106,000 Red Oak Seedling (350 acres) and afforested an additional 180 acres with red oaks. Our plans are to underplant approximately 1,400 acres and to conduct silvicultural thinning on 3,700 acres for habitat improvement.

STATE REPORTS

USDA-TN Wildlife Services

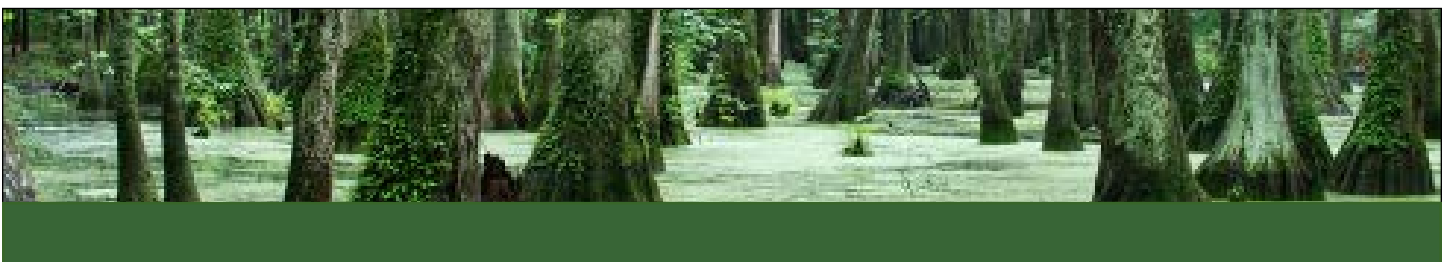
TN WS hosted two interns from the Navajo Nation this summer. The interns, **Kody Spencer** and **Allysen Yazzi**, are veterinary tech students at Navajo Technical University. They spent their time in Tennessee and Kentucky fully immersed into the program as Wildlife Specialists. They assisted with goose roundups, enhanced rabies surveillance, pigeon control, vulture harassment, and outreach programs. Kody and Allysen learned fast and were valuable members of the program. They presented on their experiences in TNKY at a conference at Navajo

Technical University in Crownpoint, NM in September along with two members of the TNKY WS program.

Long time TN WS State Director, **Brett Dunlap** has decided after 24 years in the position, it was time for a change. Brett recently accepted an Assistant Regional Director position for WS. He will remain living in Tennessee and will continue working closely with many of the wildlife professionals in Tennessee and the eastern U.S.



Navajo Nation summer interns **Kody Spencer** and **Allysen Yazzi** (front and center) with members of the WS program.



STATE REPORTS

University of Tennessee – Martin Student Chapter of TWS

The UT Martin Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society had a busy Spring 2024 semester. The chapter assisted with UT Martin's Annual Merit Badge Day, giving 12 boy scouts their Fish and Wildlife Management Badge. The chapter also hosted two fishing rodeos, one being for college students while the second one being for the children of Weakley County and surrounding areas. In March, thirteen students represented the chapter at the Tennessee TWS State Meeting. Shortly after, twenty-one students competed at the Southeastern TWS Student Wildlife Conclave. The chapter had students place in 11 individual competitions while UT Martin placed fifth overall. This upcoming year, the UT Martin Chapter has some remarkably big plans. For the fall semester, along with multiple campus events, the chapter will have a booth at the inaugural Bobwhite Heritage Festival, a group of students to attend SEAFWA in Augusta, Georgia, and will be helping TWRA with CWD testing at

deer check stations. The spring semester won't be lacking, as the chapter is working hard to prepare to host the 2025 Southeastern TWS Student Wildlife Conclave. Our student chapter is also looking forward to hosting the UT Martin Wildlife and Fisheries Biology Alumni Reunion in February of 2025.

Cleveland State Community College Student Chapter of TWS

The Cleveland State Student Chapter had a busy summer and had a busy Fall ahead. Over the summer we assisted with goose banding around Chattanooga and helped with habitat restoration at the cranberry bog in Polk County. In the coming weeks we will be assisting with Abomasal Parasite Counts, veteran hunts, county checking stations, retriever trials, and will be participating in a dove hunt with the Delta Waterfowl for the Delta University hunt program. We will also be taking 8 students to the TWS conference in Baltimore in October.



UT Martin Wildlife Society's 2024-2025 elected officers and board members.

STATE REPORTS

We will be operating a booth in the vendor area as well, so if you are there, drop by and see us! We have the booth right behind the USDA booth.

University of Tennessee – Knoxville

Dr. Craig Harper, professor of wildlife management and Extension wildlife specialist in the School of Natural Resources, received the Deer Management Career Achievement Award at the Southeast Deer Study Group's 2024 annual meeting in Shepherdstown, WV. The award was established in 1995 to recognize outstanding contributions to the understanding of white-tailed deer ecology and management in the southeastern U.S. Craig became the 22nd recipient of the award for his 30 years of work dedicated to white-tailed deer research and management.



Dr. Craig Harper (left) receiving award at the 2024 Southeast Deer Study Group meeting from **Steve Shea**, Chairman of the SEDSG (right).

Quail Forever

Tennessee Quail Forever will be hosting a family-friendly bobwhite-focused festival at the West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center in Jackson, TN on October 5th called the Tennessee

Bobwhite Heritage Festival. This is the first year of what we hope is an annual event highlighting the lasting value that quail hold in Tennessee and our hope is to educate current and future generations about how to conserve them. Bobwhite quail have historically been an icon to West Tennesseans, and we want to celebrate the value they hold & equip all who are hold bobwhite quail dear to maintain that value for generations to come! There will be many speakers from across the wildlife field, habitat management and bird-dog demonstrations, local vendors, exhibitors, a silent auction, and lots of youth activities.

Brett Dunlap, brett.g.dunlap@usda.gov

VIRGINIA



Virginia's IDEA Committee Hosts Field Inclusive, Inc. Workshop

The [Virginia Chapter of TWS' Increasing Diversity, Equity, and Awareness \(IDEA\) in the Wildlife Profession Committee](#) hosted a [Field Inclusive](#) workshop at their 2024 chapter meeting. The workshop aimed to help professionals and students critically examine social field safety issues many wildlifers face, particularly those from marginalized and historically excluded communities. Committee board members went through training so they could facilitate participants through multiple scenarios geared to specific career levels and fostered discussions to create awareness and develop solutions. All resources were provided by Field Inclusive, a non-profit organization focused on promoting field safety for all who professionally work outdoors.

Scott D. Klopfer
sklopfer@vt.edu



BUSINESS

SOUTHEASTERN SECTION TWS ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING

Please join us for the 2024 SETWS Annual Members Meeting on **Tuesday, October 15, 2024, from 8:00-10:00am EST** at the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Conference in Augusta, GA (room posted on the [conference schedule](#)). Come meet your Executive Board (if you haven't already), learn about our Section's accomplishments this past year, and participate in our discussion of what we hope to accomplish next year! For those who can't join us in person, please be on the lookout for an email invitation with a meeting link to virtually attend.

2024 Southeastern Section Officers

President

Dr. Daniel Greene, CWB®
Wildlife Scientist, Environmental
Research South
Weyerhaeuser Company
3477 S. Frontage Road
Columbus, MS 39701
dgreene.tws@gmail.com

President-Elect

Dr. Rachael E. Urbanek, CWB®
Professor of Wildlife Ecology
Department Chair
Department of Environmental Sciences
University of North Carolina Wilmington
601 South College Road
Wilmington, North Carolina 28403
urbanekr@uncw.edu

Southeastern Section Representative

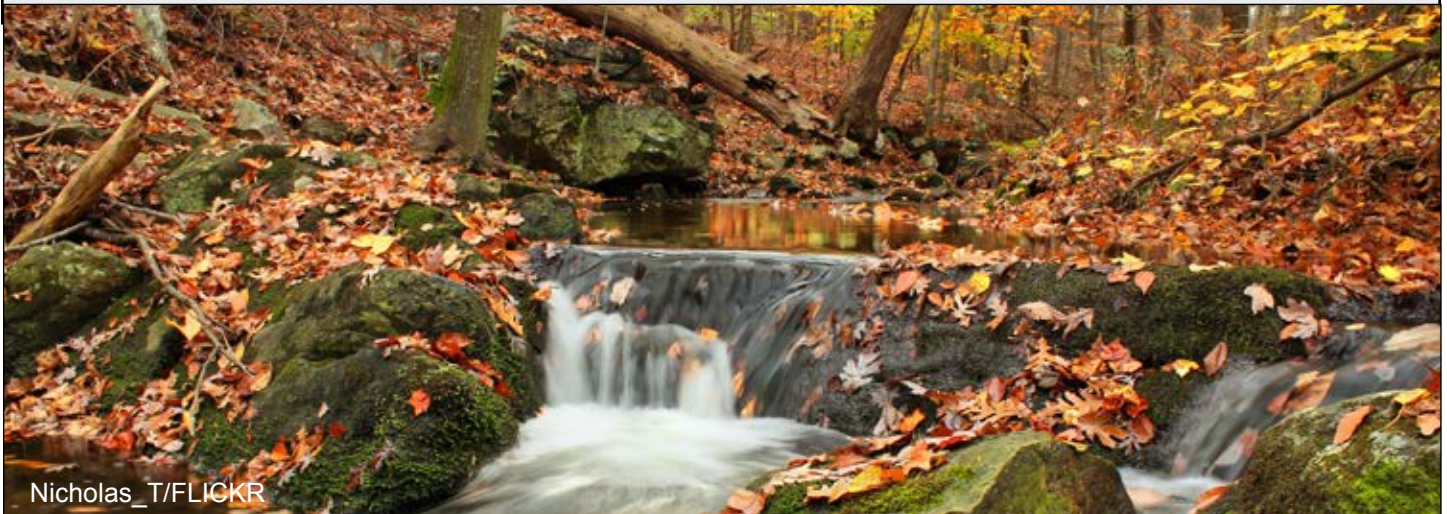
Dr. Lisa Muller, CWB®
Professor and Assistant Director
School of Natural Resources
University of Tennessee
427 Plant Biotechnology
2505 E. J. Chapman Dr.
Knoxville, TN 37996
(865) 974-7981
lmuller@utk.edu

Immediate Past-President

Kelly Douglass, CWB®
Wildlife Disease Biologist
USDA Wildlife Services
6213-E Angus Drive
Raleigh, NC 27617
(984) 202-4782
kelly.douglass@usda.gov

Secretary-Treasurer

Dr. Vanessa R. Lane, CWB®
Associate Professor of Wildlife Ecology
and Management
School of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
2802 Moore Highway, ABAC 8
Tifton, GA, USA 31793
(229) 391-4811
vlane@abac.edu



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TWS CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The Wildlife Society supports the development and advancement of wildlife professionals throughout their careers. Certification constitutes recognition by TWS that, to its best knowledge, a member meets the minimum educational, experience, and ethical standards adopted by the Society for professional wildlife biologists. Levels of Certification include Associate Wildlife Biologist®, Certified Wildlife Biologist®, and Qualified Airport Wildlife Biologist.

Read the [Wildlife Biologist Certification Program Policies and Procedures Manual](https://wildlife.org/certification-programs/) and learn more at: <https://wildlife.org/certification-programs/>.



PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD: BUILDING EFFECTIVE CVs AND RESUMES

Hosted By: [Hunting, Trapping, and Conservation Working Group](#)
Date: October 8, 5:00 pm

Many students and early career professionals have questions when putting their first CV (curriculum vitae) or resume together. In this webinar, professionals from a variety of backgrounds give advice on putting together effective CVs for the wildlife professional. Panelists have worked in state and federal government agency positions, academic institutions, and NGOs. Panelists will review common pitfalls when putting your CV together and provide tips for tailoring your CV for a specific position. Hosted by the Student Development, Early Career Professionals, and Hunting, Trapping, and Conservation Working Groups, this webinar is for those just getting started in the profession, redirecting their careers, or those seeking to provide advice to their students/employees. [Register Now!](#)

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

SAFETY, PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR, AND NETWORKING: ATTENDING YOUR FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Hosted By: Early Career Professional Working Group
Date: September 10, 5:00 pm

Attending a national or international conference for the first time can be very daunting, especially for those traveling without a support group or mentor to guide them. In this webinar, panelists will review tips for attending TWS's annual conference for the first time. Panelists will review expectations for professional behavior at the conference, safety tips for travel and lodging, as well as networking advice for those who may not know anyone at the conference. Hosted by the [Women of Wildlife](#) and [Out in the Field](#) communities as well as the [Student Development](#) and [Early Career Professional Working Groups](#), this webinar will help those who may feel intimidated by attending their first conference to head to Baltimore with confidence this October. [View Now!](#)

MEETINGS OF INTEREST

OCTOBER 2024

78th SEAFWA Conference

October 12-16, 2024
Augusta, Georgia
<http://www.seafwa.org/conference/2024>

The Wildlife Society 31st Annual Conference

October 19-23, 2024
Baltimore, Maryland
<https://twsconference.org/>

JANUARY 2025

SEPARC 2025 Annual Meeting

January 30 - February 2, 2025
*Due to impacts from Hurricane Helene, the meeting location will be changed and potentially new dates.
<https://separc.org/2025-separc-annual-meeting>

FEBRUARY 2025

30th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network and 35th Annual Colloquium on the Conservation of Mammals in the Southeastern U.S.

February 12-14, 2025
Lexington, Kentucky
<https://sbdn.org>

48th Annual SEDSG Meeting

February 16-18, 2025
Cambridge, MD
Maryland Department of Natural Resources and
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife
<https://sedsg2025.sched.com>

MARCH 2025

90th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

March 9-14, 2025
Louisville, Kentucky
<https://wildlifemanagement.institute/conference/>

TWS Southeastern Student Wildlife Conclave

March 27-29, 2025
Hosted by the University of Tennessee, Martin

JUNE 2025

International Urban Wildlife Conference 2025

June 1-5, 2025
Atlanta, Georgia
<https://www.urban-wildlife.org>

