

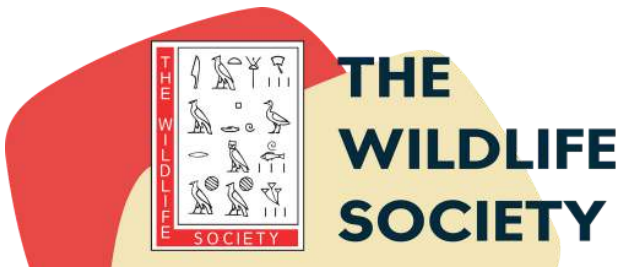
DECEMBER 2025

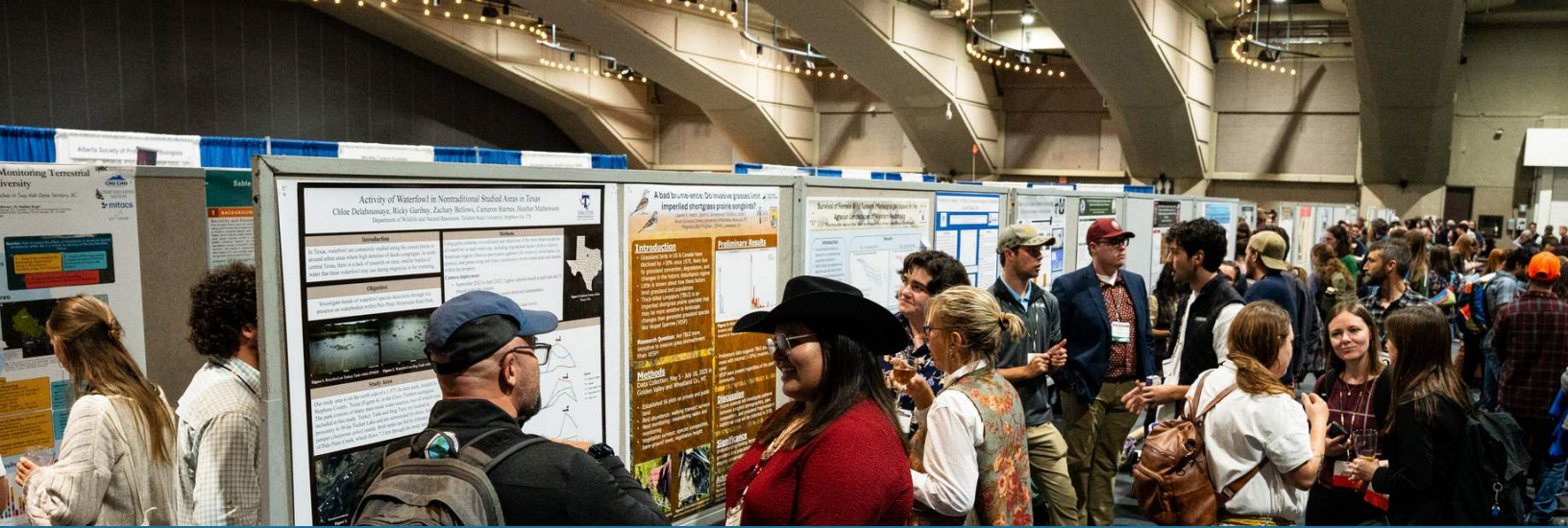
The Wildlife Society's Leadership Institute

2025 Report



WITH SUPPORT FROM:



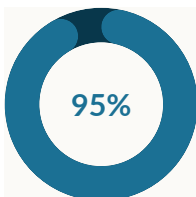


2025 LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

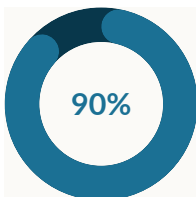


60+

We received over 60 applications in 2025.



Overall program satisfaction experience



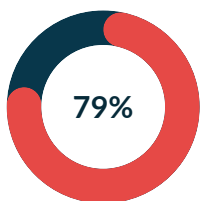
Self-rated improvement of professional skills



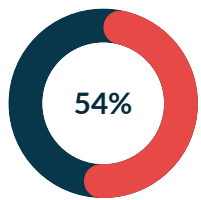
29

Applicants were from 29 different states across the nation in addition to five countries.

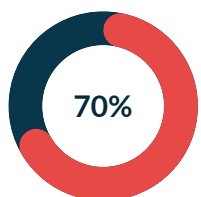
Program Results since 2008:



Participants hold leadership positions in TWS



Participants are Certified Wildlife Biologist®, Associate Wildlife Biologist®, or Qualified Airport Wildlife Biologist.



Participants remain active members of TWS

2025 Leader Institute Participants



Nicole Bealer, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Nicole Bealer works in the Research Unit for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, studying the spatial ecology and population dynamics of elk. She loves working at the intersection of science and management, using research to address pressing wildlife management challenges. She is excited to become more involved in TWS through the Leadership Institute and develop her skills as a team member and supervisor, working on large, collaborative projects.



“The Leadership Institute has helped me build confidence and be more thoughtful about my interpersonal skills at work. The best aspect of the program was the conference week and the workshops and discussions that we participated in during the week.”

Jane Kunberger, Texas A&M University



Jane is a Senior Research Associate at Texas A&M University. Her research focuses on how land management practices affect wildlife distributions and behaviors. However, she is also interested in testing the effectiveness of wildlife monitoring technologies and developing tools to support conservation decision-making. She received her B.S. in Environmental Science from the University of Alabama and her M.S. in Renewable Natural Resources from Louisiana State University.

"The Leadership Institute has made my goals clearer, has helped me with my confidence as a leader, and has provided me with a huge group of professionals that I can reach out to for advice and perspectives any time I need it, all of which are helping me determine next steps in my career."

Mallory White, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

Mallory Gyovai White is the Human Dimensions Program Manager at the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources and provides social science research and information for the various divisions within the agency. She received a B.S. in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology from North Carolina State University and a M.S. in Environmental and Conservation Sciences from North Dakota State University. She is an active member of the Virginia chapter of TWS, serving on the I.D.E.A. committee, and stays engaged with the national chapter through the Human Dimensions Working Group.

"What an incredible experience to grow personally and professionally with such a talented group of women! This will be a significant memory for me in my career."



Elizabeth Painter-Flores, University of Montana



Elizabeth recently completed her PhD at the University of Montana, where she modeled interactions between white-tailed deer and their predators. Last year, she cofounded the Latin American and Caribbean Working Group within TWS to build connections between Latin American and Caribbean researchers and U.S.-based scientists working internationally.

"So grateful for this opportunity. I feel more tuned into TWS and more willing to take leadership roles within the organization."

Sarah Pesi, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Sarah is a wildlife biologist in the small game program with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, where she coordinates research and monitoring efforts in the state for mourning doves, bobwhite quail and other small game species.

"I left the conference feeling more motivated and inspired to be involved with TWS, though that may end up being more on the state and sectional level. I also have some new strategies to foster better working relationships when interacting with regional staff."



Grace Campbell, Lykes Bros. Inc.



Grace is a wildlife biologist for Lykes Bros. Inc., one of the largest landowners in Florida, with operations including cattle, forestry, hunting and land and water resource management. She manages the gopher tortoise recipient site program, which includes client relations, coordination of tortoise intake, extensive data management and prescribed burning to maintain tortoise habitat.

"I think I have a better grasp on the fact that leadership should come with intentionality. Leadership doesn't just happen. It is a skill that needs to be developed and honed through a thoughtful, reflective process."

Jessica Brown, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

Jessica is a postdoctoral scientist at The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, where she studies integrated tick management, focusing mostly on reducing populations by treating wildlife hosts.

"It's hard to put everything into words, but I think that LI has made my goals clearer, has helped me with my confidence as a leader, and has provided me with a huge group of professionals that I can reach out to for advice and perspectives any time I need it, all of which are helping me determine next steps in my career."



Emma Schultz, Mississippi State University Geosystems Research Institute



Emma recently completed her doctoral program in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture at Mississippi State University. She has a varied research background ranging from sea turtle ecology to agent-based modeling, informing effective drone use for wildlife surveys.

"The program helped me truly think about and name my core values, which will help in selecting my future career path."

Hannah Clipp, USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station

Hannah is an Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) postdoctoral research fellow with the USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station, working with scientists in the Landscape Change Research Group to model climate change effects on birds, trees and forest pests.

"The best aspect was the different perspectives being shared --- through the readings, through the assignments, and through discussions among the LI cohort. I had a very positive experience, and I truly thank everyone involved with making the LI program!"



Amanda O'Brien, University of Florida



Amanda is a recently graduated wildlife ecologist from the University of Florida, passionate about field biology, travel, cultural exchange, scientific research and conservation storytelling and journalism. She is currently working in a seasonal position in California.

"The LI program has enhanced my professional path by allowing me to learn to be kinder to myself and to share love with others that I meet along the way. Most importantly, it taught me to be a leader in all aspects of my life, and that will bleed into my professional path. The greatest lesson I took was that the impact I have every day truly counts, and I am grateful to have shared that experience with incredible people."



Thanks to our funders, the Dallas Safari Club & Camp Fire Conservation Club, participants in the Leadership Institute benefit from invaluable experiences. They have the chance to learn from TWS Council and staff, engage in discussions on a wide range of leadership topics, and participate in mentorship activities with seasoned TWS members, including those from the TWS Heritage Committee and alumni of the Leadership Institute. We appreciate our funder's commitment to the future of wildlife conservation through its support to empower the next generation.



Become a Supporter of the Leadership Institute Program

The Wildlife Society seeks additional funding sources to support its mission of cultivating the next generation of wildlife leaders. Every donation you provide will make a meaningful difference. Please get in touch to discover more about partnership opportunities.

Program support:

- Monetary Donations
- In-kind (wildlife gear)
- Conference Sponsorship
- Mentors / Panelists

Contact Us

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