



Texas Tech students assist in the capture, data collection and release of white-tailed deer.
Credit: Texas Tech



**THE
WILDLIFE
SOCIETY**

Student Chapter Toolkit

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University of Alaska Fairbanks Student Chapter members on a glacier hike. Credit: University of Alaska Fairbanks Student Chapter

Welcome to The Wildlife Society

Founded in 1936, our mission is to **“Empower wildlife professionals to advance conservation through science, community, and professional excellence.”**

The Wildlife Society enhances our members’ networking and learning opportunities, professional and career development and provides numerous ways for them to get more involved in creating a better future for wildlife and their habitats.

Wildlife students are the future of the profession, and TWS strives to further its cause by not only training these aspiring wildlife professionals, but also empowering student chapters at **over 150 colleges and universities** across North America.

Gain access to even more resources by becoming a member of The Wildlife Society at the international level [here](#).

To find your student chapter’s representative to TWS Council, please click [here](#).

Representatives to TWS Council want to hear from YOUR student chapter about what you enjoy about TWS and how TWS can further help your student chapter. They have been elected by TWS members and are there to help you and your student chapter.



The Wildlife Society Staff. Credit: Katie Perkins/The Wildlife Society

About The Wildlife Society



200+ CHAPTERS & SECTIONS

We support wildlife professionals and their work of conservation in over 50 states, provinces and territories across North America and beyond with 150+ student chapters, 56 chapters, 30+ working groups and eight sections.



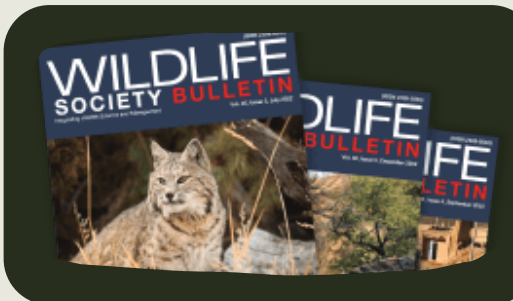
2,000+ WILDLIFE CERTIFICATIONS

We have provided over 2,000 Associate Wildlife Biologist® and Certified Wildlife Biologist® certifications to strengthen professionalism in the field.



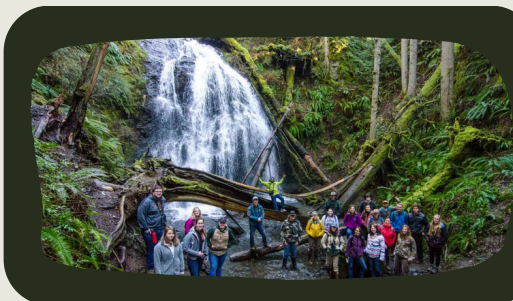
10,000+ MEMBERS

We have members across North America and beyond working for federal, state and provincial agencies, universities, non-profits, private companies across research, technician, advocacy, habitat/population management, consulting, administrative roles and more!



600,000+ PUBLICATION READS

We publish three scientific journals: *Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Wildlife Society Bulletin* and *Wildlife Monographs*. Additionally, we publish *The Wildlife Professional*, a popular magazine for members.

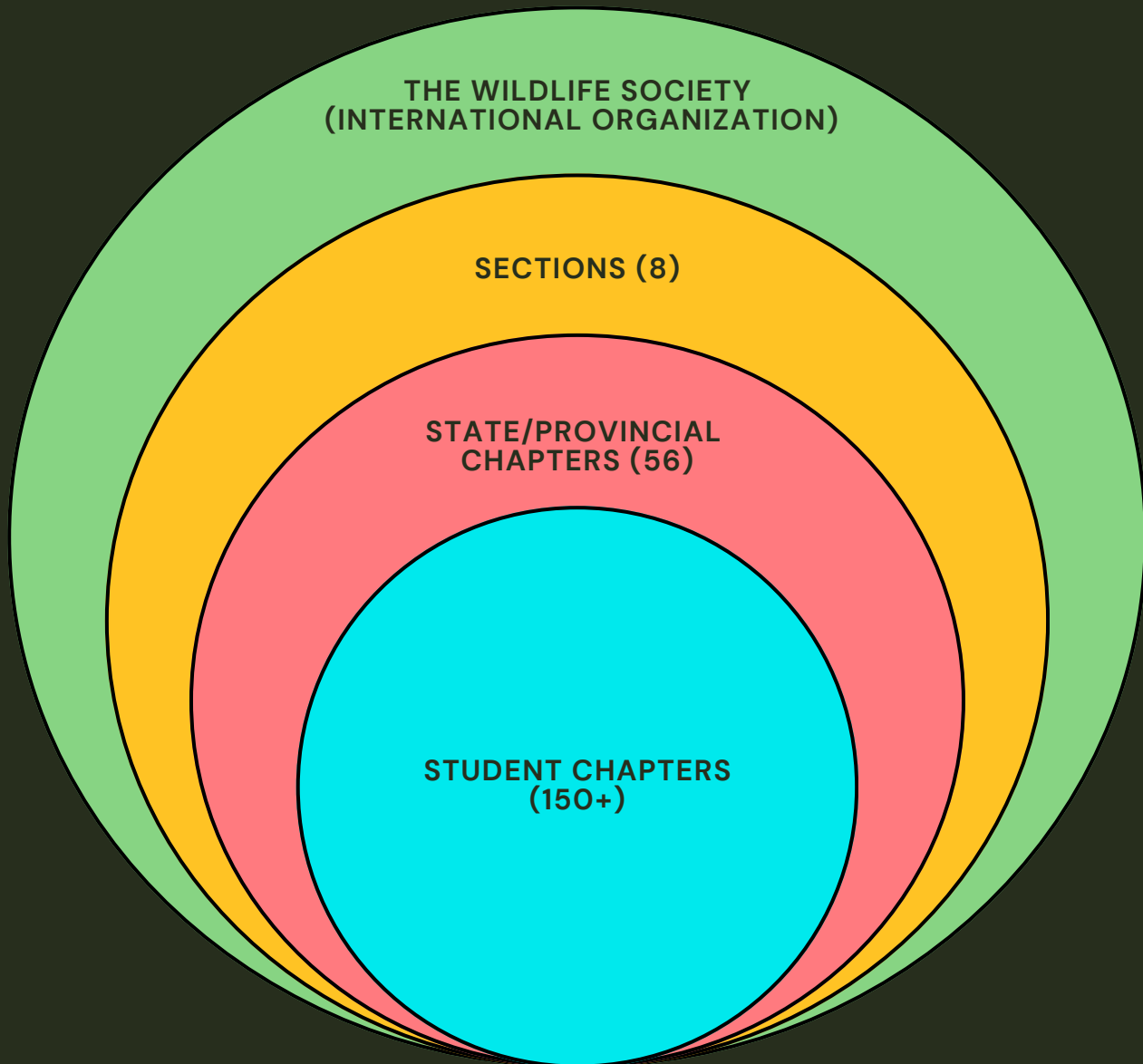


PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

Each year we deliver educational materials and provide funding to students, early career professionals, chapters, sections and working groups to increase knowledge, skills and career opportunities in the wildlife field. We also provide funds to BIPOC students and professionals to further DEI initiatives.

The Wildlife Society Structure

For a list of all TWS chapters and sections, please click [here](#).



Both new and existing student chapters are required to:

- Maintain an interest in wildlife and advancing TWS' mission; and
- Organize under the rules and policies of their academic institution(s).

Getting the Most Out of Your TWS Student Membership

There are numerous ways to get involved with TWS at the international, section, chapter and student chapter levels. Explore these TWS student membership benefits*, which enable you to:

- Access six issues of *The Wildlife Professional* and weekly issues of the *eWildlifer*
- Receive free access to all three of TWS' scientific journals
- Find your next job on our **job board**
- Access to TWS' 30+ working groups**
- Access grants and internships through our website
- Network with students and colleagues through Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Bluesky and X
- Attend the resume review sessions and network with professionals at the student-professional networking event during TWS' Annual Conference
- Get published in *The Wildlife Professional*
- Present during student-only poster sessions or regular sessions
- Free membership in the Student Development Working Group
- Apply for TWS certification^
- Get hands-on training at conclaves
- Access TWS' member directory (via the member portal) to locate experts in your field
- Win awards and grants

*These are TWS student member benefits (at the main, international level) and not student chapter member benefits. You may join at wildlife.org/join.

**Working groups offer students a chance to engage in wildlife topics of interest and connect with professionals conducting cutting-edge research. With over 30 groups, topics range from human dimensions to wetlands, including a student development group that organizes student events at TWS' Annual Conference. Membership fees for students are typically \$5 or less.

^Apply for certification: After earning your degree, you may qualify as an Associate Wildlife Biologist® (AWB®; check coursework requirements early to plan your curriculum). Experience can sometimes substitute for coursework. AWB® certification is the first step toward full certification and can boost your resume. Apply within six months of graduation to receive a discounted application fee. Certification can help you stand out for hiring, promotion and salary considerations.

Getting the Most Out of Your TWS Student Membership

Present at TWS' Annual Conference

There are many opportunities to present original research on a variety of topics both orally and through posters. Topics of specific sessions change from year to year, so you should check the conference website for details. Abstracts are typically due in the spring for the upcoming fall TWS Annual Conference. Plus, there is a special poster presentation session devoted solely to undergraduate research.

Join your regional TWS section

- Take advantage of section-specific scholarships, awards and travel grants
- Attend annual section meetings
- Network with other students and professionals
- Learn about upcoming workshops

Join your local TWS chapter

- Take advantage of scholarships, awards and travel grants
- Attend local chapter meetings
- Learn what professionals and students are doing in your state/province
- Network with other students and professionals
- Tap into fundraising opportunities



Students present their research at The Wildlife Society Annual Conference. Credit: Katie Perkins/The Wildlife Society

Meet the Student Development Working Group

As a student member of The Wildlife Society, you are automatically a member of the **Student Development Working Group of TWS**, free of charge!

The SDWG promotes increased student awareness of TWS **membership benefits**, works to **expand knowledge and technical capabilities** of student members, and helps prepare student members for **professional wildlife careers**.

The working group **facilitates networking between students and experienced TWS members** by:

- hosting meetings, workshops and webinars
- hosting a student chapter leader's lunch
- selecting the recipient of TWS' Student Chapter Advisor of the Year Award and more!

Connect with SDWG

SDWG members can connect on the SDWG Discord server with other students in wildlife and have opportunities to contribute to the future development of student communication.

To join send an email to **tws.sdwg@gmail.com** with your name and the email associated with your TWS membership.

The Wildlife Society's Council, or governing board, includes a Student Liaison. The Student Liaison to Council is filled by the current chair of the SDWG and is a non-voting participant at Council meetings to share the perspectives of students on Society issues. **Visit our website** to meet the current Liaison.



TWS staff member Jennifer Murphy speaks to Student Chapter leaders at The Wildlife Society Annual Conference.

Credit: Katie Perkins/The Wildlife Society

Annual Reporting Requirements

The Wildlife Society's student chapters are not required to file tax report forms or annual report forms to the Society. Student chapters are not listed as subordinate groups under TWS; therefore, student chapters do not have an EIN under TWS and do not need to submit IRS paperwork through TWS.

Officer Report Form – this form needs to be submitted to TWS headquarters (kconfortin@wildlife.org) by the student chapter secretary (or secretary/treasurer) within 20 days following each election. The blank officer report form can be found on the [TWS website](#).

*The officer titles (i.e., president, president-elect etc.) may be changed to match the student chapter's officer titles as described in the student chapter's bylaws if they differ from the report form model.



The MacEwan University Student Chapter participates in a Bio-Blitz at Whitemud Creek Park in Edmonton, Alberta.
Credit MacEwan University Student Chapter of TWS

Professional Conference Etiquette

WATCH THE TWS WEBINAR ON CONFERENCE ETIQUETTE [HERE](#)

What happens at the conference?

1. Arrive, register for the conference, check into the hotel.
2. Review the scheduled scientific presentations in the poster, symposia and contributed sessions.
3. Plan what talks & posters you will see and plan your movements among the various rooms.
4. Use breakfast, lunch and dinner as opportunities to network. This is where you build relationships!
5. Network and socialize in the evenings.



Students mingle at The Wildlife Society annual conference. Credit: Katie Perkins/The Wildlife Society

Appropriate attire:

- Students at a professional conference should dress business casual. If you happen to be making a presentation (poster or oral), attending the banquet, or accepting an award, you will want to dress business professional. During the remainder of the conference, you'll find that people generally wear business casual. Jeans may be acceptable in some instances, but you certainly won't miss with casual dress pants and a button-down blouse or shirt. Field clothes are appropriate for field trips.

What to bring?

- Business cards – find free templates on Canva
- Updated resume – You should have a few copies on hand just in case you bump into a potential employer.
- Notepad/pen for notes (good talks, contacts, potential employers, etc.) and to write down those names and affiliations to access later.

Professional behavior:

You will have the opportunity to meet and make an impression on many colleagues, employers, advisors, etc. Assure these are positive and that your advisors and home institution would be proud of you as a representative. Greet others warmly, smile, be direct, look folks in the eye, demonstrate pride in your accomplishments and what you have to offer employers. Your behavior directly reflects on you, your home institution and on your faculty advisors. Advisors certainly do hear about some of the good and all of the bad impressions that you make. Your positive impressions reflect well on you; negative impressions generally reflect on your academic advisor and institution. Thus, you may be asked to leave immediately and return to campus at your own expense for unprofessional behavior. Also remember that if your attendance is sponsored by your home institution, their policies are in effect (e.g., regarding alcohol consumption, etc.).

Making the Most of Your Conference Experience



Students network with professionals at The Wildlife Society Annual Conference. Credit: Katie Perkins/ The Wildlife Society

At TWS' Annual Conference, students should talk to as many people as possible; everyone present is there to network, as well. These casual meetings can lead to future employment or can be the beginning of a lifelong friendship. The Annual Conference provides students with a unique opportunity to make contacts with others in their field.

In addition to socializing, it is a good idea to attend the more formal presentations and poster sessions. This is a great opportunity to see what the current research trends are, and to identify your academic strengths and weaknesses.

While at TWS' Annual Conference, make sure you check out:

- Student field trips
- Student Chapter Leaders Lunch (usually requires an RSVP in advance)
- Student-Professional Networking Event
- Quiz Bowl/Trivia Night
- Certification application assistance sessions
- Workshops
- Resume review sessions
- Student research-in-progress poster session
- TWS working group meetings, including the Student Development Working Group annual meeting

Applying for TWS Awards

TWS Student Chapter of the Year Award

- The Student Chapter of the Year Award application and full instructions are available on [TWS' website](#). To qualify for the award, all student chapter officers must be members of TWS (at the international level) for the year in which they are applying.

TWS Student Travel Grants

- Student and early-career-professional members presenting a technical paper or poster at the TWS Annual Conference are eligible to apply for a TWS Student Travel Grant. The number of awards presented and amounts are dependent upon available funding each year.

Special Recognition Award

- The Special Recognition Award honors truly exceptional contributions that advance wildlife conservation, ecology, management, education, and the mission of TWS. This award now encompasses, but is not limited to, accomplishments historically recognized through several legacy awards, including student and advisor leadership.

Student Poster/Presentation Awards

- All student posters/presentations that wish to be judged during the TWS Annual Conference are eligible for awards. To be eligible, an individual's paper/poster first must be accepted for presentation by the Program Committee (for contributed papers and posters) or the organizer of a TWS-sanctioned symposium or special poster session. Notification of acceptance of contributed papers/posters is usually made around mid-May.

TWS Student Conclave Grant

- TWS student chapters host up to eight regional Student Conclaves each year that provide college students with valuable hands-on training in wildlife management and conservation, and networking opportunities with wildlife professionals. Some activities include field trips, workshops (i.e., telemetry, trapping, chemical immobilization, mist-netting), field competitions, local tours, game-calling competitions, quiz bowls, banquets, photography contests and guest speakers. Depending on available funding, TWS may offer grants for the TWS student chapter(s) hosting each Student Conclave. The instructions and application materials are available [here](#).

Native Student Professional Development Program

- The Native Student Professional Development Program offers an exciting opportunity for Indigenous students enrolled in wildlife programs to connect with professionals in the field and gain valuable experience. Up to 10 students will be selected to attend The Wildlife Society's Annual Conference, with complimentary registration, travel support, mentorship and access to exclusive sessions. Participants will also receive a one-year TWS membership—making this a unique chance to build skills, grow your network and explore careers in wildlife. Visit wildlife.org for details.

Digital Content Guide

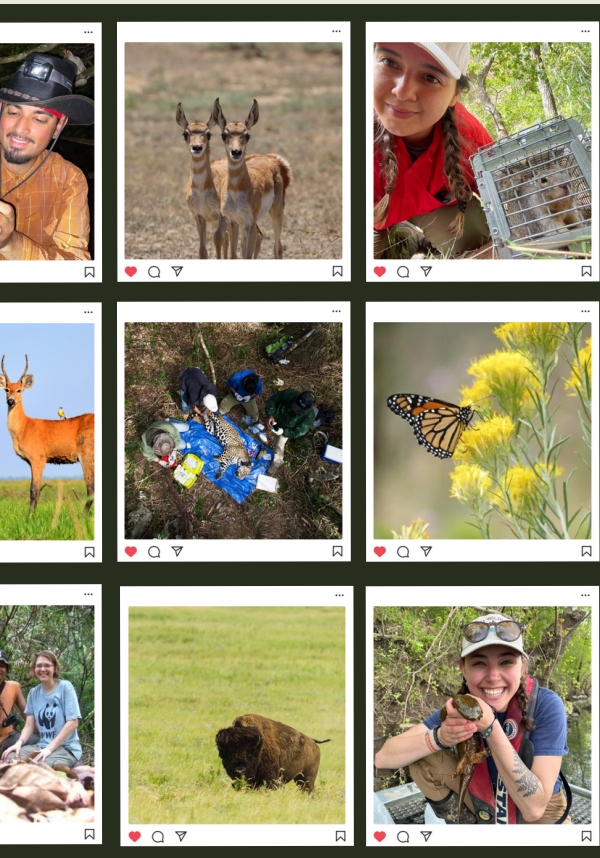
Social media is a great tool to recruit and retain members of your student chapter. When creating and using your accounts, here are some things to keep in mind:

Do:

- Tag us! @TheWildlifeSociety so we can see and reshare your work.
- Highlight:
 - Fieldwork
 - Events & workshops
 - Member highlights
 - Fundraisers or outreach
 - Research or class projects
- Credit photographers or sources when reposting.

Don't:

- Use copyrighted music or images without permission.
- Share identifiable images of people without their consent.
- Overload with text in graphics, keep it simple and scannable.
- Use The Wildlife Society's official logo.



***When sharing photos of people handling wildlife, please be sure wildlife is properly handled and to provide a detailed explanation in the caption to avoid potential misunderstandings from members of the general public.**

Not sure what to post? Try these:

- "A day in the life" of a student biologist
- Throwback to last year's field trip
- Time-lapse of a restoration project
- Fun wildlife fact of the week
- Meet our members/alumni spotlights
- Future meeting/event flyers

Submit photos and videos of TWS student chapter happenings here for a chance to be featured on TWS social media channels: <https://wkf.ms/4gXAnv6>



Conclusion

We hope you have found this Student Chapter Toolkit helpful. Remember that the toolkit will constantly be updated based on changes in TWS policy and should be checked at least once every semester. Should you be interested in providing additional information for this toolkit, recommend other chapters, need additional TWS materials for your student chapter, or would like to learn more about TWS in general, please contact TWS staff member Kristi Confortin, at kconfortin@wildlife.org or 301-897-9770 x 343.