

# The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society

June 2006

## Highlights in This Issue:

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## Message from the President:

I was honored, in my 20th year of membership, to become the Alaska Chapter president at the 18 April business meeting. It gives me satisfaction to give back something to this organization that has contributed to my professional development and works to safeguard wildlife species and their habitats in Alaska.

I want to thank outgoing president Eric Taylor for setting a standard of excellence in leading the Executive Board that I will be striving to maintain for the next two years. Eric has strengthened our newsletters, moved our website to the TWS server, increased Board outreach and encouragement to the growing Student Chapter at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks (UAF), engaged the membership in the recent elections, and repeatedly demonstrated his ability to polish Chapter correspondence on issues important to wildlife conservation in Alaska. Eric has pledged to focus on membership issues as Past-president, and I look forward to his continued guidance on the Executive Board. I also want to thank outgoing Board members Anne Morkill, Lisa Saperstein, Tara Wertz, and Kevin White for their service to the Chapter over the last two years, and departing Past-president Doug Larsen for his six years of service.

*By any definition, effective wildlife conservation in TWS is a result of three facets: sound science (credibility), engaged professionals (energy), and well-planned public outreach. Remove any one facet and nothing will happen! Conservation is best accomplished in a proactive manner, not by waiting for something to happen and then reacting.*

An unprecedented 50% of our 187 members voted in the April elections! Eric and I made a strong effort to recruit candidates, and Eric worked with TWS headquarters to allow us the new option of electronic voting along with paper ballots. I would like to thank all the candidates and welcome the new members of the Executive Board for 2006-08 [listed below]. Minutes of the 18 April meeting are posted on our website at [www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak/AnnMtgNotes18Apr06\\_final.pdf](http://www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak/AnnMtgNotes18Apr06_final.pdf).

TWS is a conservation organization “*dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education.*” The word “*stewardship*”, like “*conservation*” or “*sustainability*”, means different things to different people. A definition to satisfy ecologists as well as economists might be: “*Preserving the function of ecosystems to maintain or improve human living standards (both material and spiritual).*” By any definition, effective wildlife conservation in TWS is a result of three facets: sound science (credibility), engaged professionals (energy), and well-planned public outreach. Remove any one facet and nothing will happen! Conservation is best accomplished in a proactive manner, not by waiting for something to happen and then reacting. I think a proactive approach should be a major emphasis of the Alaska Chapter, and I seek to greatly strengthen our Education and Information Committee.

After querying several past-presidents for insights on key issues we need to address, here are my three goals for the Alaska Chapter over the next two years:

- Increase member participation, not only from among the core professionals that defined TWS ranks for many years (biologists and managers in public agencies), but from all groups that contribute to wildlife conservation, including planners, consultants, educators, non-government organizations. However, I want membership to mean more than simply reading the newsletter. I seek to increase the proportion of members actively involved in our various committees, the lifeblood of an effective organization. We are second in membership size only to the Texas Chapter, and we are fortunate to have several retired members with a wealth of firsthand knowledge on the history of Alaskan issues. **We need to give members meaningful opportunities to participate—please send me your thoughts on this.**
- Continue collaborative efforts with other professional societies involved in renewable resource management. We should interact more with the Alaska chapters of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) and Society of American Foresters (SAF). We are kidding ourselves if we think that wildlifers alone will be solving complex management issues involving climate change, resource development, or technological advances that affect wildlife, habitat, or human-wildlife interactions such as viewing and hunting. For example, much of human settlement, recreation, and resource development (oil, timber, mining) in Alaska occurs along our coast, major rivers, and wetlands. Thus, we need to better understand wildlife ecology at the interface of terrestrial and aquatic systems in the context of human developments. See the *Meetings and Announcements* section for a description of the joint AFS-SAF-TWS session at the Alaska AFS meeting in Fairbanks this November.
- Increase public outreach on complex issues in resource management. Elected leaders in government (or their appointees, such as members of the Alaska Board of Game) often make decisions that affect wildlife and society. Scientists and resource managers are rarely in a position to make major decisions, but they can raise the level of informed debate about potential outcomes of those decisions. It is human nature to simplify in our mind how the world works, but as in constructing a mathematical model, oversimplifying complex systems results in loss of predictive power. The Alaska Chapter can offer informative, reasoned and detailed analyses, independent of agency politics, in the hopes of improving the basis of decisions affecting wildlife. We can use the attention generated by our national meeting in September to advertise our ability to aid in decision-making and make ourselves known to the public. Please read the Education and Information Committee article, and assist the Chapter in reaching out with informative conservation messages to the general public and decision makers.

*Our organization has incredible potential for education and outreach, and the Board will work with members to see that we achieve it!*

The new Executive Board looks forward to serving you for the next two years, but we will need your help to continue being an effective conservation organization for Alaska’s wildlife resources and the people who depend on them for sustenance, livelihood, and spiritual well being. As organizations tackle the complex conservation issues of today, the world has plenty of people who quickly offer the pessimistic opinion, “That won’t work.” The Alaska Chapter needs constructive malcontents who will modify that declarative opinion into, “That may not work, but I have an idea on how it can, and I’m willing to help make it work.” Our organization has incredible potential for education and outreach, and the Board will work with members to see that we achieve it!

## 2006-2008 Alaska Chapter Executive Board

President: Tom Paragi, ADF&G, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701, [tom\\_paragi@fishgame.state.ak.us](mailto:tom_paragi@fishgame.state.ak.us); phone 907-459-7327, fax 452-6410

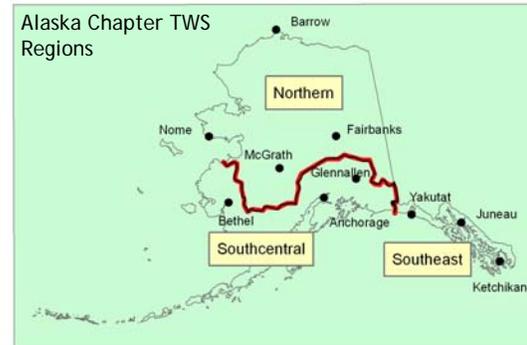
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Editor's Note: *Please make note of upcoming events, personnel changes, issues and projects, or anything of interest to other AK-TWS members, and pass them on to your regional representative. Thanks.*

### News from Southeast:

By Steve Lewis, Southeast Representative

#### People:

**Meg Hahr**, formerly a wildlife biologist at Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park, has become an Ecologist for Kenai Fjords National Park. Meg will be missed in Southeast but we are fortunate she has remained in the state.

#### News:

**Icy Bay Kittlitz's Murrelet Study.** In late May, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Biologist Michelle Kissling led a team, including Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) biologist Steve Lewis and National Park Service (NPS) biologist Mason Reid, which captured and radio-marked 14 murrelets. This is pilot work for an upcoming 2-year study which document nest locations and the spatial and temporal distribution and abundance of adult and

juvenile murrelets in this remote part of Alaska's Lost Coast.

**Mitkof Island Western Screech-owl Study.** Michelle Kissling and Steve Lewis captured and radiomarked 8 owls (3 females and 5 males). They supervise a field crew gathering data on the detectability of owls (using standard broadcast survey methodology), as well as aspects of screech-owl ecology such as habitat use and nesting biology.

**Tongass National Forest Plan Amendment Process.** The US Forest Service (USFS) began taking steps to respond to the August 2005 Ninth Circuit Court decision and to the findings of the recently completed Tongass Forest Plan 5 Year Review. During March, the USFS hosted a week-long, facilitated workshop in which subject matter experts presented information about a key component of the plan--the *Conservation Strategy*. The amendment website ([www.tongass-fpadjust.net](http://www.tongass-fpadjust.net)) provides background information, continuous updates on progress, and opportunities for the public to present their views and input

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## News from Southcentral:

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By Robin West, Southcentral Representative

### People:

**Kevin Laves** replaced **Bill Shuster** as the Resources Staff Officer for the Seward Ranger District of the Chugach National Forest. Kevin transferred from the West Yellowstone District of Gallatin National Forest. Bill retired after 32 years of service with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS)

**Deb Cooper**, District Ranger in Seward is moving into a two year detail as the National Fire Plan Coordinator of the State of Alaska. Alaska Division of Forestry, U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Kenai Peninsula Borough are contributing to the Interagency Project Agreement and Deb will be stationed in Soldotna.

**Bill Leacock**, Wildlife Biologist, transferred from Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge to Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.

**Hollis Twitchell**, formerly a Subsistence Resource Coordinator at Denali National Park is now an Assistant Refuge Manager at Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

**Meg Hahr** transferred from the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park in Skagway to an Ecologist position with Kenai Fjords National Park in Seward.

**Charles Ardizzone** has been selected to fill the Subsistence Coordinator position in the BLM State Office in Anchorage. He will be transferring from his present position as a Wildlife Biologist in the Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS.

### News:

Avian Influenza monitoring is a major undertaking for the summer of 2006 at coastal refuges such as Izembek and Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuges. Other work at Yukon Delta NWR includes the drafting of an Environmental Assessment to potentially allow fox control in brant colonies under certain conditions, and changes in moose management along the Kuskokwim River. More than 40 moose were collared in an area that held virtually no moose five years ago.

The M/V Selendang Ayu went aground near Dutch Harbor in December 2004. Ongoing monitoring of habitats within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge has revealed numerous beaches with

substantial oil still below the surface. Threats to resources are not currently considered serious.

Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge reports that the revised Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan should be out for public review later this summer.

Chugach National Forest continues to work on the Kenai Winter Access Forest Plan Amendment, the Hut to Hut Environmental Impact Statement, the Whistlestop partnership with the Alaska Railroad, and the upcoming Russian River Interagency Master Development Plan.

The Kenai Interagency Brown Bear Study Team is initiating a pilot study to determine the practicality of a future population estimator using a genetics-based mark-recapture technique.

A joint study with ADF&G, ADOT, Federal Highways, and Kenai National Wildlife Refuge is examining moose movements across the Sterling Highway in an attempt to mitigate potential moose-vehicle collisions resulting from a highway improvement project.

The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council announces the release of the FY 2007 Invitation for Proposals. See [www.evostc.state.ak.us/Proposals/invitation.htm](http://www.evostc.state.ak.us/Proposals/invitation.htm).

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## News from the North:

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By Carol McIntyre, Northern Representative

### People:

**Miranda Terwilliger** has finished work on her master's thesis at UAF and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and is a new staff member at the Alaska Sea Life Center in Seward.

**Nikki Guldager** is the new biologist/pilot for Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, effective June 12. Nikki is filling the position held by Mike Vivion who retired last December.

**Laura Philips** is the new ecologist at Denali National Park and Preserve. Laura recently completed her master's thesis at UAF and will be working on the integrated Denali road capacity study.

**David Shaw** is the new research biologist at the Alaska Bird Observatory. David recently completed his master's thesis at UAF and will be leading up field studies on arctic warblers and field sampling for Asian H5N1 in interior Alaska.

News:

A gubernatorial debate sponsored by the student Resource Management Society drew five candidates to the University of Alaska-Fairbanks campus on 17 April. Some of the student questions involved predator control, habitat protection, and fish and wildlife law enforcement (see further discussion under the Education and Information Committee report, and Patrick Valkenburg's essay about the need to restore the state Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection).

Upcoming Events:

**2006 Alaska Park Science Symposium: *Park Science in Central Alaska: Crossing Boundaries in a Changing Environment*.** September 12-14, 2006 at the Murie Science and Learning Center, Denali National Park and Preserve. The Alaska Park Science Symposium is a biennial series organized by the National Park Service, highlighting scientific endeavors focused on Alaska National Park regions. The 2006 Symposium will focus on research in interior Alaska and seek to emphasize science that crosses political, geographic, social, discipline or other boundaries

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## Alaska Chapter Committees and Reports

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### Conservation Review Committee:

By Dave Yokel (chair)

**Alaska Legislature Wrap-up:** The second regular session of the 24<sup>th</sup> Alaska Legislature adjourned on May 9, 2006. The Alaska Chapter TWS had interest in three bills introduced during the 24<sup>th</sup> Legislature. Senate Bill (SB) 85 would have repealed the ban on off-highway vehicles within five miles of the Dalton Highway. SB 85 passed in an 11-9 vote of the full Senate on February 8, 2006 and was transmitted to the House, where it was referred to the Transportation Committee. Our chapter sent a letter to all 40 Alaska Representatives that described some of the potentially negative impacts to wildlife populations, wildlife viewing, and existing opportunities for hunting if this bill should become law. Over the next three months, SB 85 failed to move out of committee and so died at the end of the legislative session.

Committees are always seeking members willing to help with periodic tasks. Descriptions of committee tasks are found in the bylaws (<http://www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak/proposed%20AKCHPTR%20BYLAWS%201June06.pdf>). Contact a member of the Executive Board if you have questions or want to become involved!

SB 166 would have established a \$5 annual conservation tag required of anyone who used a commercial provider to view fish and wildlife, with primary focus being tourists on cruise ships. The resulting revenue would be used to supplement funding for fish and wildlife management in Alaska, particularly as non-federal match for State Wildlife Grants from the USFWS to the ADFG. This bill was referred to the Senate Resources Committee but never moved out of committee.

SB 170 would have increased fees for hunting, trapping and fishing licenses but would also have restricted how the ADFG could use the increased revenue and shifted some ADFG authority to the Boards of Game and Fisheries. SB 170 was described in more detail in our December 2005 newsletter. Since then, the bill never moved out of the Senate Resources Committee.

We will be watching again next winter for these bills to re-appear during the 25<sup>th</sup> Legislature.

### Education and Information Committee:

By Tom Paragi and Dave Person

Nancy Tankersley (chair, after 1 October), Dave Person, Tara Wertz.

**Raising public awareness on wildlife issues.** There are many important and controversial topics in conservation and resource management that are in public forums and the media daily. The Alaska Chapter can and should play a role in public education through print and broadcast media. On 17 April, the student Resource Management Society at UAF hosted a debate among five gubernatorial candidates that focused on natural resource issues. There was the strong and unanimous pledge by all candidates to reinstate the Habitat Division at ADF&G and restore a separate Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection ("brown shirt Troopers") in the Department of Public Safety. We should publicly support these issues during the gubernatorial primary and in the race after party candidates are chosen in August. A few retired Chapter members, whose long experience in

Alaska carries weight, have agreed to help spread our message. After the elections, we should continue this public awareness on other issues prior to the first session of the 25<sup>th</sup> Alaska Legislature, which will convene on 17 January 2007. Non-game funding and increases in hunting license fees to match federal grants are two issues likely to resurface in the next session, as is motorized access for hunting in the Dalton Highway corridor. Contact a committee member if you would like to be involved in outreach efforts this autumn.

**Continuing professional education in times of meager budgets.** When budgets of our employers become austere, support for training is often cut before salary or operating budgets. One of the primary means for the Alaska Chapter to provide continuing education for our members is through our annual meetings, where presentations of research and technical workshops allow sharing of current knowledge. However, the rising cost of travel in our large state increasingly hinders employer support for travel to professional meetings.

At the April business meeting, we discussed the historic practice of rotating the meeting site alternate years among Interior, Southcentral, and Southeast. Travel on the mainland road system is relatively inexpensive compared with flying (or a long drive and ferry ride) to Southeast. The Executive Board has produced a short poll in this newsletter to gauge member ability or willingness to travel to different regions of the state for an annual meeting. Please provide input!

The Chapter needs to examine new ways to provide professional development for our widespread membership. We need suggestions for creative means to accomplish "distance learning" in the broad sense of continuing education and scientific networking. Internet-based options and email will never substitute for face-to-face interactions at annual meetings, but we need to effectively use technology to provide benefits and services to our members, regardless of where they work in our large state.

Dave Person, a research biologist with ADFG in Ketchikan, has stepped forward to initiate the spirit of distance learning. In each newsletter, Dave will briefly review insightful articles that examine key issues in resource management to stimulate thought and possibly correspondence among interested parties. The article chosen for his first review includes proposed roles of professional societies in oversight of applied science and its use in management decisions.

Dave has also suggested ideas for web-based training. Employers are increasingly favorable to funding online courses during work hours because of savings in travel expenses. The Chapter could develop a roster of such commercial or agency-sponsored courses (statistics, modeling, GIS, technical writing, resource law, etc.) and provide it as a link on our website. There may be other topics the Chapter could initiate in-house, such as 30-minute Powerpoint modules focused on Alaska for data management, forest succession, density-dependence in ungulates, fire ecology, top-down vs. bottom up regulation, statistical methods for resource selection, evolutionary ecology, genetic techniques, etc. The presentations would have citations for further reading and outline the topic in sufficient detail to be more than simply an overview. We could contact various key TWS members in the state (or elsewhere) and enlist their help developing topics and programs. The first step would be to put together a prospectus that outlines our objectives and suggests the means to meet them. **Please send your continuing education suggestions to [dave\\_person@fishgame.state.ak.us](mailto:dave_person@fishgame.state.ak.us).**

### Membership committee:

By Jimmy Fox

Jimmy Fox (chair), Amy Kearns, Eric Taylor

Chapter membership has been dropping over the past few years. The reasons have not been determined, but the consequences are not acceptable. The voice of the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society is needed more today than at any other time in the history of the state - chapter membership should be increasing in number not declining. To reverse the decline, a new membership committee (Jimmy Fox, Amy Kearns, Tom Paragi, and Eric Taylor) held its first teleconference on May 1, 2006.

During the meeting, the committee discussed its mission as defined by chapter bylaws, i.e., to encourage the maximum number of qualified persons to become members of the chapter and TWS. The group agreed to cast a broad net, seeking not only wildlife biologists but all professionals that work with wildlife and/or their habitats. The committee agreed that their primary goal is to increase chapter membership before the upcoming national conference in Anchorage by reaching out to former Chapter members, prospective members, and current

members of TWS that are not Chapter members. The national headquarters of TWS has expressed their support of this membership effort by offering free publications and other items to new members.

Since the teleconference, the group has volunteered dozens of hours drafting and mailing recruitment letters; combining membership rosters from the past twelve years; generating recruitment lists for former members, non-chapter TWS members, and prospective members; assembling a contact list for all natural resources-related employers in Alaska; and developing outreach materials. The membership committee would like for every chapter member to consider themselves part of this recruitment drive. **Please share a chapter newsletter with your co-workers and invite peers to join our Chapter** - a collection of wildlife professionals speaking, on behalf of wildlife and society in Alaska. Finally, the group is seeking enthusiastic and energetic chapter members to join the membership committee, especially members from southeast Alaska. If interested, contact Jimmy Fox ([jfox1990@alaska.net](mailto:jfox1990@alaska.net)).

**Audit Committee:**

Amy Kearns (chair)
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**Nominations and Elections: vacant****Resolutions and Public Statements: vacant****Conserving Our Wildlife Conservation Heritage (COWCH): vacant**

**The Chapter is seeking at least one person from each region to be a point of contact for COWCH** (<http://www.wildlife.org/professional/index.cfm?tname=cowch>), to identify subjects and interviewers, and coordinate logistics, etc. This can be a fun opportunity to contribute to historic archives and meet some interesting pioneers of the wildlife profession. Please contact your regional representative if you would like to help.

**National Position Statement on Old Growth Forests**

Matt Kirchhoff (Committee Chair) submitted a draft to the Executive Board in mid-May, and the Board provided comments back to Matt in late May. Once revised, the draft position will be forwarded to the position statement subcommittee of TWS Council, which will decide whether to forward it to Council. If approved by Council, it would be printed in *The Wildlifer* for a 60-day comment period by the full membership.

**Technical Reviews on Bear Management in Alaska**

The Committee on Sale of Bear Parts (Gail Collins, Chair) submitted a revised draft back to the Executive Board on 31 May, and it was forwarded to Chapter members on 4 June for an approval vote and comments (**submit by 3 July**). The Committee on Bear Predation Management (Rod Boertje, Chair) is getting close to submitting a revised draft back to the Executive Board. The Committee on Bear Baiting (Dick Shideler, Chair) is still working on the initial draft.

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**Poll: Where Should We Hold Our Annual Meetings?**

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The location cycle of the annual meeting of the Alaska Chapter was discussed at the 2006 business meeting on 19 April. Currently, the Alaska Chapter rotates the location of its annual meeting between Interior, Southcentral, and Southeast Alaska. Recent declines in state and federal agency travel budgets and declines in Alaska Chapter TWS membership suggest the Alaska Chapter should consider holding its meeting more frequently in Southcentral and Interior Alaska to lower travel costs for the majority of membership and encourage meeting attendance.

In the past 6 years, Alaska Chapter membership declined 17% (226-187). Holding the annual meeting more frequently in areas with the greatest concentration of natural resource professionals should encourage

attendance and membership. The Executive Board is cognizant of the critical importance of Southeast Alaska to fish, wildlife and habitat resources. We also recognize the significant contributions of Alaska Chapter TWS members residing in Southeast Alaska. Finally, we are aware that Southeast Alaska Chapter TWS members (14% of total membership) incur air travel costs when meetings are held in Southcentral or Interior Alaska. However, the Executive Board is looking at meeting location options that provide cost benefits to the majority of members, provide incentives for non-members to attend, and encourage membership in TWS.

The Alaska Chapter Executive Board requests membership provide input by selecting one of the following four alternatives (and/or provide other ideas to encourage meeting participation from all areas of the State). See instructions below for submitting input by e-mail.

- Alternative 1 (No Action) Maintain the Alaska Chapter TWS Annual Meeting rotation as follows: Year 1 Anchorage, Year 2 Fairbanks, Year 3 Juneau, [repeat rotation].
- Alternative 2: Rotate the Alaska Chapter TWS Annual Meeting as follows: Year 1 Anchorage, Year 2 Fairbanks, Year 3 Anchorage, Year 4 Juneau, [repeat rotation].
- Alternative 3: Rotate the Alaska Chapter TWS Annual Meeting between Anchorage and Fairbanks.
- Alternative 4: Rotate the Alaska Chapter TWS Annual Meeting between Anchorage and Fairbanks. Waive meeting registration fees for all members residing in rural (defined here as any area not disconnected to primary highways in Alaska) areas.

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## Proposed Changes to AK Chapter Bylaws:

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The Executive Board has proposed one major and several minor changes to the AK Chapter bylaws. The proposed bylaws, complete with changes, are located at: [www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak/proposed%20AKCHPTR%20BYLAWS%201June06.pdf](http://www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak/proposed%20AKCHPTR%20BYLAWS%201June06.pdf). The following is a summary of the two groups of changes:

- 1) Eliminate the Chapter-only member. This change would eliminate the \$5 Alaska Chapter Membership Only category and require all Alaska Chapter members to be members of The Wildlife Society. The Executive Board has proposed this change because:
  - o Of the 187 members in the Alaska Chapter, 184 members are members of The Wildlife Society. Only 3 individuals are members of Alaska Chapter only.
  - o Current chapter bylaws state that individuals paying the \$5 Alaska Chapter dues but who were not members of The Wildlife Society must be approved by the Chapter Membership Committee. Until this year, the Chapter has not had a membership committee and has not reviewed \$5 Alaska Chapter membership only applications.
  - o Current Chapter bylaws state that only Alaska Chapter members who were TWS members could vote in elections. This was not enforced until the 2006 election.
  - o Chapter membership lists were complex, inaccurate, and nearly impossible to maintain due to the variety of membership and payment options (TWS and Alaska Chapter dues to Bethesda or TWS dues to Bethesda with Alaska Chapter dues to Alaska or Alaska Chapter dues to Bethesda or Alaska Chapter dues to Alaska). Determining the number of valid ballots in the 2006 election was problematic and required personnel from both the Chapter and TWS National headquarters to verify ballots.
  - o Nearly all Chapter documents (newsletters, position statements, correspondence, technical reviews, resolutions) are posted on the Chapter's website and available to all wildlife professionals and the public at no charge. These can serve as education and outreach and can aid in recruitment of members into the Chapter. These types of benefits that a \$5 Chapter-only member received in the past can now be received free of charge. But to participate fully as a professional in the workings of the Chapter, including voting in

elections and position statement approvals, it was (and will continue to be) necessary to be a member of TWS.

In summary, 98% of the Alaska Chapter members are members of The Wildlife Society. The Chapter has not been following our bylaws by reviewing/approving \$5 Chapter-only membership applications, nor has the Chapter reviewed election ballots to ensure individuals were members of The Wildlife Society. Finally, a bylaw change to form a membership that can be tracked by The Wildlife Society's headquarters as well as the Alaska Chapter will reduce errors in membership renewals, improve the election process, and promote professionalism in the Chapter.

2) Make several minor changes in various areas:

- Add website posting and electronic voting in addition to mail. In addition, allow the option of appointing any Chapter member who is not an officer candidate to receive or count ballots, because of the recent lack of an election committee.
- Allow appointment of a non-voting University of Alaska Student Chapter representative to the Executive Board to improve communication and gain perspective
- Broaden consideration of student travel stipend for attending Chapter meetings to include Section and National meetings.
- Clarify the independence of administrative and financial responsibilities between University of Alaska Student Chapter and Alaska Chapter.
- Provide the option of awarding cash honoraria or gifts to recognize Chapter members for extraordinary service to The Wildlife Society or the Alaska Chapter (e.g., serve as chair of national committee). Executive Board members would be ineligible for cash or gifts if fulfilling duties of elected office.
- Clarify tax identification and tax exemption numbers.
- Amend the process for completion of Chapter position statements or technical reviews to require that proponents of a new statement or review submit a questionnaire to be evaluated by the Executive Board prior to initiation of the statement or review. A questionnaire was adopted by Executive Board in January 2005 and published in February 2005 newsletter [www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak/News\\_Feb2005.pdf](http://www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak/News_Feb2005.pdf).

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## Please vote and provide input on these proposed changes:

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To vote on the By-Laws and participate in the poll for location of the annual meeting, please send one email to [tom\\_paragi@fishgame.state.ak.us](mailto:tom_paragi@fishgame.state.ak.us) with "TWS votes" in the subject line by **Monday 10 July**. Choose whether you approve (yes or no) for each of the two proposed by-law changes ("*Remove Chapter-only membership*" and "*Others*") and choose one of the four numbered options (1, 2, 3, or 4) for location of the annual meeting. You may provide comments on either subject.

You may copy and paste this text as your reply, inserting your input, of course:

Proposed revision of By-Laws:

1) Remove Chapter-only membership—Approve? (yes or no)

2) Other revisions—Approve? (yes or no)

Comments:

Location of annual meeting:

I recommend option (1,2,3,or 4)

Comments:

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## Statewide News:

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by Tom Paragi

### Board of Game Expands Predator Control

In May the Alaska Board of Game reauthorized predator control programs in the state. The Board expanded the designated area for wolf and bear control practices in two of the five regions where they are presently authorized and allowed some new practices. The wolf control program in Game Management Unit 16B (Cook Inlet) was expanded to include part of Unit 16A, and the wolf control area in Units 12 and 20E was expanded to include most of the range of the Fortymile caribou herd in Alaska in Units 20B, 20D, 20E, 12 and 25C. With authorized expansions, predator control has been approved for roughly 11% of the state on predominantly state lands (control practices would have to also be approved by federal land managers to occur on some federal lands). Landing of aircraft before shooting wolves is required in Unit 13 (Nelchina Basin), whereas aerial shooting of wolves is allowed in the other four areas, which include Unit 19A near Aniak and eastern Unit 19D near McGrath. To gather biological information, all wolves must be retrieved and sealed.

Sale of black bear hides with claws attached and sale of black bear skulls were authorized under hunting regulations within areas where active predator control programs are in effect. Shooting of black bears over bait during the same day a hunter is airborne will be permitted in all areas with active predator control programs as long as the hunter is 300 feet from the aircraft. No changes to existing predator control programs were approved in Units 13 and 19A. A grizzly bear control program that allows permittees to take grizzly bears over bait or shoot grizzlies the same day airborne was approved in Unit 19D East. The bear control area in Unit 20E (Tok) was expanded. All bears taken under control programs must be sealed.

Intensive management (IM) is mandated by a 1994 state statute. In May the Alaska Legislature approved a funding increment for ADF&G to increase monitoring of predator and prey populations in IM areas. The goal of intensive management is to increase the allowable harvest of ungulates through a combination of habitat enhancement, predator control (allocation of mortality from predators to humans), and harvest regulations (including antlerless hunts near urban areas).

### Alaska Loses a Pioneer Wildlife Manager

Long time conservationist and wildlife administrator **Jim Brooks** passed away at his home near Juneau on 19 May at age 83. Brooks began studying sea lions for the Alaska Territorial Department of Fisheries in the 1950s, helped craft the first state Fish and Game regulations and then became the first director of the Division of Game within the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 1959, studied polar bears for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and documented impacts of early oil exploration in the late 1960s, and served as Commissioner of ADFG during 1972-77. He then moved to the National Marine Fisheries Service, retiring in 1991 as Alaska Region Chief of Management and Enforcement. His colorful career was outlined in the autobiography, *North to Wolf Country*, which was released by Epicenter Press in 2003. This book served as the basis for a June 11 Anchorage Daily News article: [www.adn.com/outdoors/story/7846885p-7740513](http://www.adn.com/outdoors/story/7846885p-7740513).

### Chapter Supports State Wildlife Grants

State Wildlife Grants (SWG) from the USFWS have provided a 3:1 match to states for nongame programs since 2001, with Alaska receiving \$18.3 million to date. SWG was funded at \$65 million in federal Fiscal Year 2006, and President Bush recommended \$75 million in FY07. The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed an Interior Appropriations bill that would reduce SWG to \$50 million. The Executive Board produced a letter on short notice to our Senate delegation that described the benefits of SWG to Alaska and asked for support in funding the President's request in the Senate version of the bill. The letter was signed and faxed on 13 June and should be posted soon on the Chapter website under "Correspondence."

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## Meetings and Announcements

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### Anchorage 2006! TWS 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference is fast approaching (22-27 September)

Gino DelFrate and Howard Golden, Arrangements Committee Co-Chairs

This major undertaking of the AK Chapter is proceeding well.

**Help and ideas are needed!** The Fundraising Committee is still looking for donations for the silent auction. If anybody is interested in helping or has suggestions on businesses or organizations that may be interested in donating, please contact committee co-chairs Becky Kelleyhouse ([becky\\_kelleyhouse@fishgame.state.ak.us](mailto:becky_kelleyhouse@fishgame.state.ak.us)) or Glenn Stout ([glenn\\_stout@fishgame.state.ak.us](mailto:glenn_stout@fishgame.state.ak.us)).

**Liz Solomon still needs volunteers.** Anyone interested in volunteering needs to fill out a volunteer application and send it directly to her. Information and applications are on the TWS website.

**5K Fun Run will need more helpers.** Deb Rudis of Juneau ([deb\\_rudis@fws.gov](mailto:deb_rudis@fws.gov)) agreed to be the contact person for a 5 kilometer race sometime during the conference and has a couple members from Anchorage who will help, but they would like a few more interested people to help with planning and race-day tasks (checkpoints, marking the course, etc.). Please contact Deb if you are willing to help.

**Register now and make hotel reservations soon.** Not only will members be able to take advantage of the better rates we will better estimate the number of attendees. All indications are that this will be a well attended conference. In addition to the Hilton and Howard Johnson hotels, there is space available at a Hostel downtown for students. This is an inexpensive alternative housing option designed to help those on a tight budget.

### Alaska Chapter, American Fisheries Society, 14-16 November 2006, Fairbanks

The Alaska Chapter of AFS has welcomed involvement of the Alaska Chapter TWS and the Alaska Society of American Foresters in hosting a joint ½ day session the morning of 15 November. Tom Paragi and Robin West are TWS members of planning committee. The committee met on 8 May and chose the topic--*Marine derived nutrients in Alaskan ecosystems*--to address in six invited presentations and a panel discussion. More details will follow in the next newsletter, or watch [www.fisheries.org/afs-ak](http://www.fisheries.org/afs-ak).

### Alaska Chapter Annual Meeting, Spring 2007, location TBA

Kevin White has agreed to co-chair the planning committee and is looking for another co-chair and others willing to help after the national meeting. We have already received two inquiries about a joint meeting next spring. The Northern Furbearer Conference, which occurs every 2-3 years in Alaska or the Yukon Territory, has expressed interest in again holding a joint meeting with the Alaska Chapter. Also, the non-game program leader for ADFG and Mammals Curator at the University of Alaska Museum would like to hold a half-day session for small mammal specialists in association with our meeting.

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## New Publications:

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"*Responsible marine wildlife viewing in Alaska*" is the second volume (March 2006) of the *Alaska's Seas and Coasts* series. This color publication can be ordered as a hard copy for \$3 shipping from the Alaska Sea Grant Bookstore or downloaded directly from the same site at no cost ([seagrant.uaf.edu/bookstore/pubs/M-49.html](http://seagrant.uaf.edu/bookstore/pubs/M-49.html)). To subscribe to *Alaska Seas & Coasts*, send your mailing address to [Alaska Sea Grant publications](http://Alaska Sea Grant publications) or call 474-6707.

*Marine wildlife viewing is good for Alaska's economy, and good for the participants' souls. But is it good for the animals? The answer is yes, if boaters and tide-poolers use care when near the animals. This publication describes laws and guidelines for observing whales, sea lions, walruses, sea otters, coastal birds, and other animals*

A new book entitled "*Reindeer Management in Northernmost Europe: Linking Practical and Scientific Knowledge in Social-Ecological Systems*", edited By: B.C. Forbes, M. Bolter, L. Muller-Wille, J. Hukkinen, F. Muller, N. Gunsley, and Y. Konstantinov," is now available online at:  
<http://www.springer.com/west/home/generic/search/results?SGWID=4-40109-22-52088092-0>

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## UAF Student Chapter Report

By Simon Wigren

This year was an exciting and successful one for the UAF Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society. The annual game dinner was by far the biggest success in recent years, raising over \$1,100 on auction items, and over \$500 in donations. Membership increased to over 80 students throughout the year thanks to a greater effort in advertising and hosting guest speakers from various agencies and organizations at TWS meetings. Ten chapter meetings were held throughout the spring semester with great student attendance. Student members also volunteered many hours helping the Ruffed Grouse Society with their annual banquet, setting up the spring migration banding nets at Creamer's Field, and choosing films to be included in the Far North Conservation Film Festival in November. New officers were elected and they assumed most of the executive board duties during the second half of the spring semester. Thank you to all of our members for their hard work and dedication, Falk Heuttmann for his tireless enthusiasm as our faculty advisor, and to our donators who make this student organization possible.

2006-2007 Executive Board President - Simon Wigren Vice President - Michelle Salinas Treasurer - Micah Miller Secretary - Candice Flint Executive Officers - Geoff Lowery, Quentin Hecimovich, Chad Bieberich, and Jan Tomsen.
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## TWS Restoration Working Group Re-activated

By Bruce Campbell

The TWS Restoration Working Group (RWG) has been around since 1998 but inactive the last couple of years. Last summer, a number of TWS members interested in resurrecting the RWG got together by phone and e-mail to elect officers and reaffirm the working group's goals and objectives.

Goals of the working group are:

- Facilitate communication and the exchange of information among members of the Society interested in restoring wildlife populations and degraded habitats.
- Enhance knowledge and technical capabilities of wildlife professionals in the area of restoration.
- Increase public awareness and appreciation of the technical capabilities of restoring wildlife populations and degraded habitats.
- Develop implementable ecosystem management principles enabling community-wide recovery.
- Identify effective monitoring and evaluation programs to determine successes and failures of restoration techniques.

A working group business meeting was held during last year's conference in Madison. All those attending expressed interest in seeing the RWG proceed, especially as restoration work becomes more of a focus in wildlife management in the future. Several suggestions were made as to how to best get the RWG active and moving in a positive direction again:

- Host symposia and field trips at annual TWS conferences, and possibly at regional or chapter meetings.
- Conduct surveys of RWG membership
- Keep RWG website current. Send contributions to [Mitch\\_Sternberg@fws.gov](mailto:Mitch_Sternberg@fws.gov).
- Maintain regular contact with membership through email or electronic newsletters.
- Cooperate/synergize with Society for Ecological Restoration (SER). This may be best accomplished by co-sponsoring symposia at national TWS or SER meetings.

To join RWG or obtain more information, visit [www.wildlife.org/wg/restoration/index.cfm](http://www.wildlife.org/wg/restoration/index.cfm), contact Bruce Campbell, western regional representative, at [bruce.h.campbell@state.or.us](mailto:bruce.h.campbell@state.or.us), or the working group Chair, Mitch Sternberg. If you have thoughts/ideas on what the RWG should be doing in the west, contact Bruce Campbell.

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## Member Contributions

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(Note: This section allows Chapter members to discuss topics or ideas pertinent to our organization, following review by the Executive Board. The purpose is to stimulate member involvement and professional discussion. Opinions of the authors do not necessarily reflect those of TWS or the Alaska Chapter TWS.)

### Restore the Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection

By Patrick Valkenburg (edited here for space)

Soon after the last gubernatorial election, the Murkowski administration decided to downgrade the Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection to the Alaska Bureau of Wildlife Enforcement (ABWE) under the Division of Alaska State Troopers. Many people across the state were skeptical that the relatively minor cost savings would outweigh the likely reduction in enforcement of wildlife and fisheries laws and regulations. Reasons for the move were never entirely clear or very well explained, and there was no opportunity for public comment. After almost 3 years of this experiment, it is now clear that the move was a failure from the perspective of fish and wildlife protection.

After the reorganization to the ABWE, there has been a 24% decrease in annual fish and wildlife patrol and investigation time by fish and wildlife troopers and a 20% decrease in fish and wildlife contacts. However, there has been an accompanying 50% increase in non-fish and wildlife citations and a 75% increase in non-fish and wildlife warnings by ABWE troopers. Also, money that comes into the state Fish and Game Fund from fines is down significantly. In other words, fish and wildlife enforcement officers are spending much less of their time on wildlife enforcement and much more of their time assisting the state troopers with regular law enforcement duties.

As is usually the case, statistics don't tell the whole story. Most young people embark on a career in wildlife law enforcement because of their dedication to resource management and associated activities, including hunting, trapping, fishing, and flying. Under the new system, there is no guarantee that recruits into the state troopers will ever get to be fish and wildlife enforcement officers or pilots. These new policies have already taken their toll on recruitment, and ABWE is having trouble filling vacant positions.

At the end of the Hammond administration in the early 1980s, when fish and wildlife enforcement was a high priority, there were 117 commissioned positions and an annual budget of 13.5 million dollars. Today, there are less than 90 positions with a budget equivalent in early 1980s dollars of about 9 million. Since the early 1980s the wildlife and fisheries-related economy of Alaska has grown to well over 2 billion dollars, fishing charter fleets have greatly expanded, and the transporter industry has grown substantially.

Fish and wildlife enforcement officers have always had busy periods and slower periods. The slower periods have allowed protection officers to catch up on case reports, investigate ongoing cases, participate in education and community involvement, and work with biologists on management projects. Voluntary compliance is a key part of wildlife enforcement, and good public relations and education are essential in building support for management and enforcement programs. Under the reorganization, whenever fish and wildlife troopers have some time to work on case files or perform other duties, they are called away to do non-fish and wildlife-related activities. Many fish and wildlife troopers now have 20-30 cases piled up on their desks awaiting action. It is frustrating when someone goes out of their way or shortens a hunting or fishing trip to turn in a lawbreaker and then finds out that ABWE didn't have the time to follow up on the case.

Although the reorganization of Fish and Wildlife Protection was a well intentioned move to assist state troopers, public dissatisfaction with fish and wildlife enforcement throughout the state indicates that a change is needed. It seems clear that the enforcement function needs to be organized at the division level, perhaps back within the Department of Fish and Game. Outdoor users should let their legislators and candidates know they feel on this issue.

## Discussion of a David Bella essay: Ethics and credibility of applied science.

By Dave Person.

*"Something is clearly wrong with the way our society assesses environmental impacts. Too many shortsighted policies, assumptions, and deficiencies continue without effective challenge. Too much of the written material is mere filler that satisfies procedural requirements in ways that allow programs and projects to continue without serious critical review. Too many of the best environmental scientists, particularly those dedicated to the highest ideals of public service, have become cynical. Something is fundamentally wrong".* Those lines were written by Dr. David Bella in an introduction to a remarkable essay in a remarkable U. S. Forest Service general technical report (PNW GTR-288) published in 1992. The report contains a series of essays on ethics, science, and natural resource policy.

Bella's essay describes one source of much that is wrong with assessments of environmental impacts: systemic distortion. Organizations produce and promote information favorable to their ambitions or programs. Information or opinions that favor the organization survive within the group, whereas those that are contrary are systematically filtered out. The result is the systemic distortion of reality. If each member simply fulfills their organizational role, they become mere "functionaries", constantly fed a diet of systematically selected information. They may not realize that for them systemic distortions define what is reasonable, responsible, and realistic. That is not conspiracy theory and no group of people is directly to blame. Instead it is the process of how an organization rewards its staff, how they fund or not fund work, how they assign staff holding favorable opinions versus those that dissent. It is the result of how information is passed on to upper levels of management, how tasks are compartmentalized, and how zealously people avoid debate or confrontation. Bella described how systemic distortion within NASA played a serious role in the deaths of the Challenger astronauts.

The upshot is that agencies and organizations should cherish their "trouble makers" or dissenters as sources of thinking outside the box. Organizations and agencies should promote internal debate and dialog about important policies and information. Of course I am jousting with windmills here. As one DuPont supervisor wrote concerning that company's monitoring of the disposal of nuclear waste - *"The problem lies with the system...it is not realistic to expect any chain of command to report unfavorably upon itself"*. Hence, professional organizations such as The Wildlife Society are critically important for maintaining the credibility of applied sciences. Bella argued that professional scientific societies needed to become more active as forums for debate about scientific information and how that information is used to formulate policy. He believes those organizations have a responsibility to preserve the dialogic community of scientists from the relentless corruption of systemic distortion. I strongly agree with him. I urge members to read David Bella's essay as well as the others contained in PNW-GTR-288. You can find it on the web at [www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/pnw\\_gtr288.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/pnw_gtr288.pdf) or e-mail me ([dave\\_person@fishgame.state.ak.us](mailto:dave_person@fishgame.state.ak.us)) for a copy.

## 2006 Membership Renewal

**Renewals Available On-Line:** Renewals for the 2006 calendar year are available on-line at The Wildlife Society's store (<http://www.wildlife.org>). An individual may renew their TWS membership (\$64.00), as well as their NW Section dues (\$5.00) and Alaska Chapter dues (\$5.00). The Journal of Wildlife Management may be delivered on-line (\$25.00) or on-line and print (40.00); similarly, the Wildlife Society Bulletin can be ordered on-line (\$25.00) or on-line and print (\$40.00). TWS members can also join one or more of the 18 TWS working groups.