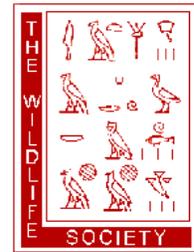




The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of
The Wildlife Society

February 2007



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Message from the President:

First legislative open house. On the evening of February 6th, I was joined by Chapter members Mike Goldstein (Northwest Section President), Wini Kessler (Northwest Section representative to TWS Council), and Doug Larsen (Chapter President, 2002-04) in hosting our first State legislative open house at the Westmark Barnaof Hotel in Juneau. During the four hour session with light snacks provided, there was attendance by about 25 Senators, Representatives, or their staffers as well as the new Commissioner of Fish and Game (Denby Lloyd), the Director of the ADFG Division of Wildlife Conservation (Matt Robus, a Chapter member), and a staff member from the office of the Lieutenant Governor. We answered questions and discussed issues one-on-one over displays of TWS publications at a table. We displayed informative posters produced by Jimmy Fox (one each for AK Chapter and national TWS), and we provided a selection of Alaska Chapter positions and comment letters from the last decade. **Our interactions were positive overall, and several legislative members thanked us for the opportunity to learn about TWS.** I followed up questions about wolf control, ballot initiatives, spruce bark beetles, economic development, and climate change by emailing links to Chapter and national TWS websites for positions or technical reviews.

Forestry-Wildlife session at AFS meeting. On November 16th, I chaired the invited session on *Marine-derived nutrients in Alaskan ecosystems* at the annual meeting of the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society in Fairbanks. The invited session was co-sponsored by the Alaska Chapter TWS and the Yukon River Chapter of the Society of American Foresters. Most of the six invited talks included wildlife species as models for nutrient transport, and the subsequent 45-minute discussion section was going strong when the session ended. Roughly 40 people attended, including several students, and many offered positive comments following the session.

Chapter members highlighted in national newsletter. The November-December 2006 issue of *The Wildlifer* noted several Chapter members for a variety of achievements. At the national meeting, John Schoen received the honor of *TWS Fellow*. In the conference photography contest, Steve Ebbert won *Best of Show* and the category of *Fish, Reptiles, Amphibians, and Invertebrates* while Johathan Fiely (a UAF Student Chapter member) placed top in *Human Dimensions*. In the Run Wild! 5K event, all three top places in the Women Masters (40+) division were Alaskans (Deb Rudis, Celia Rozen, and Danielle Jerry), while Craig Gardner and Bud Johnson took the top two places in the Men Masters. Congratulations to all of you! Other chapter members mentioned in the newsletter include Gail Collins, for becoming a Certified Wildlife Biologist, and several members who contributed to the Investors Campaign to support improvement of TWS information technology and web services.



National meeting revenue. For our work on the 13th annual conference, the Chapter received a check for \$4,500 as guaranteed revenue from the meeting. With attendance close to 1,600 at final tally (well beyond the projected level), we are going to be receiving another check for a percentage of the net revenue.

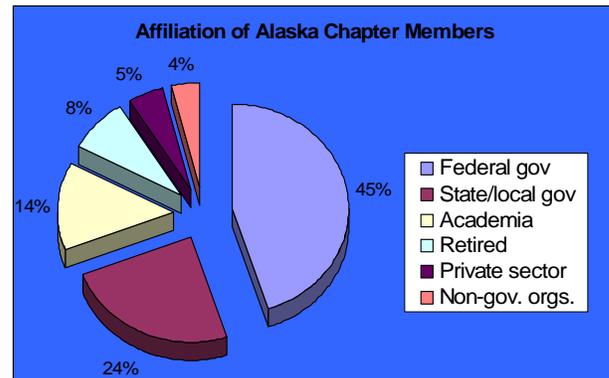
Alaska Chapter Grows to Largest in TWS!

Membership Committee Report, by Jimmy Fox

It's exciting to announce that with over 250 members, we have surpassed the Texas Chapter as the largest in The Wildlife Society! (Be sure to call your Texas colleagues and let them know.) For the past seven months, Amy Kearns, Michelle Kissling, Tom Paragi, Eric Taylor, and I have been working hard to encourage wildlife professionals interested in the conservation and management of wildlife resources in Alaska to become members of TWS, the Northwest Section, and the Alaska Chapter. We have contacted hundreds of potential members in resource agencies, private industry, natural resource consultants, and others. But there is one thing the committee must have help with--personal communication with potential members. Chatting over coffee, discussing issues on the way to a meeting, or sitting down to discuss the professional benefits one gains from participation in TWS remains the most effective recruitment strategy available. To encourage you to recruit new members, you or a member you sign up will receive an engraved ulu that commemorates the recent 13th Annual TWS Conference. Please remember two important changes in membership rules: 1) all Alaska Chapter members must be members of TWS; and 2) there is a new family membership category.

To keep up momentum, the committee had a teleconference in December. We agreed to work with TWS to address problems with the online membership process, and improve exchange of membership information. We also discussed membership retention and representation. Concern was expressed that our recent spike in membership was related to the recent national conference, and may not be retained after this year. We do know that in the past, many Alaska Chapter members have allowed their membership to lapse after only a few years. We plan to tackle this issue by keeping new members engaged, and contacting past members to determine why they leave the chapter.

The composition of our membership in September 2006, based upon employment, indicates the majority are federal employees (see inset); however, some agencies like the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service may be underrepresented. In addition, most State of Alaska employee members work for ADF&G, but few are represented from other departments. However, the most underrepresented category of wildlife professionals are those within the private sector. To address this concern, we all need to recruit our colleagues within lesser-represented federal and state agencies and private companies. Lastly, there is a trend of members not renewing their membership upon retirement. This is of major concern as many members will retire within the next several years. We are currently addressing several explanations and will be speaking with retired professionals to better understand how TWS and our chapter can retain these valued members.



Last year represents great achievements for the Alaska Chapter, and with a larger membership we will accomplish the greatest goal of all - increasing our effectiveness in addressing Alaska's wildlife and habitat issues. Our challenge in 2007 will be to retain this surge in membership, and with your help we will. For more information, contact me at jfox1990@alaska.net.

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 by the 25th of October, January, April, or July.



2006-2008 Alaska Chapter Executive Board

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President-elect: Howard Golden, ADF&G, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, howard_golden@fishgame.state.ak.us, phone 267-2177, fax 267-2433

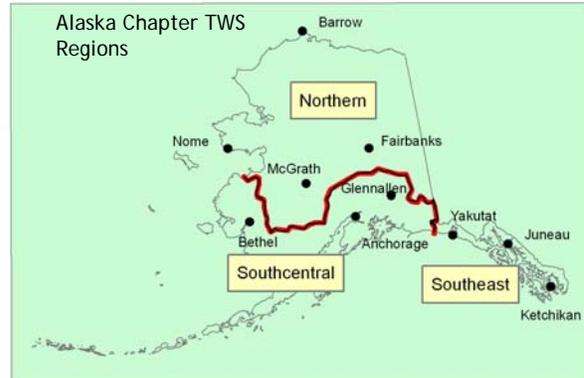
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UAF Student Chapter TWS Representative (non-voting): Jan Tomsen, PO Box 751512, Fairbanks, AK 99775, fsjet5@uaf.edu, phone 374-0578

News from Southeast:

By Tom Paragi

Wayne Regelin retired December 1st as Deputy Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) after having served in that position since May 2003. Dr. Regelin moved to Alaska from Colorado in 1977 to be a research biologist for the USFWS at the Moose Research Center. In 1982 he became the Research Coordinator for the ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) in Fairbanks. Wayne was promoted to Deputy Director of DWC in 1988 and was Director during 1994-2003.

Ellen Campbell retired after 30 years with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). She moved to Juneau in June 1990 from the national forests in Mississippi to be Wildlife Program Leader in the Alaska Regional Office. While in Juneau she has become a Staff Budget Coordinator and then the Terrestrial Ecology Program Leader. Ellen is currently a candidate for Northwest Section representative to TWS Council. (Watch for upcoming candidate profiles and ballots in the Northwest Section newsletter!)

Lynn Shipley retired from the USFS after working as a wildlife biologist in several locations on the Tongass National Forest. He began at Hoonah Ranger District in 1988, moved to Thorne Bay in 1992 and Ketchikan in 1994, and then served in the Sitka Supervisor's Office during 1995-2007.

News from Southcentral:

By Robin West, Southcentral Representative

People

Nancy Tankersley left her job as a Federal Aid grants biologist for USFWS in Anchorage to pursue sea turtle conservation with an NGO in Mexico this winter. Nancy is a Certified Interpretive Guide and will return to Alaska to guide wildlife watching trips during the summer. She will also be teaching Interpretive Guide and Interpretive Host courses for the National Association of Interpretation during spring and fall. Because of her travel commitments, Nancy stepped down as Chair of the Education and Information Committee and was replaced by Jimmy Fox. Nancy can be contacted at akwildguide@yahoo.com.



Danielle Jerry, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Anchorage, is now the Division Chief for Realty and Natural Resources. This change means that Danielle retains FWS Refuge biological program oversight, loses oversight of the Refuge fire program, and gains all of the realty function oversight for approximately 80 million acres of refuge lands.

Sean Farley, ADF&G, has returned to the Interagency Brown Bear Study Team (IBBST) for the Kenai Peninsula to represent the Department with ongoing brown bear research and management issues in the area. The IBBST is currently evaluating a proposal to estimate population size using mark-recapture hair DNA methodology, along with other projects.

Bobbie Jo Skibo has been hired by Chugach National Forest in an experimental position to help coordinate efforts in the Russian River area to minimize negative human-bear interactions over time.

Andy Baltensperger is beginning a graduate research project on marten in the Kenai Mountains. The work is supported by Colorado State University, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, and the Warner College on Natural Resources.

News

The Skilak Wildlife Recreation Area Plan for Kenai National Wildlife Refuge was completed in December 2006. The Regional Director chose a modified "Alternative B" which will focus on continuing to manage the area primarily for wildlife viewing, environmental education, and interpretation. The plan also calls for additional facilities development, habitat manipulation, and a new youth hunt for grouse and snowshoe hare.

The Federal Subsistence Program has received new proposals for moose, black bear, and brown bear for Game Management Unit 15. Additionally, significant new subsistence fisheries proposals for the Kenai River and surrounding areas have also been received. All proposals will be reviewed by the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council March 13 - 16, 2007 in Anchorage, and final decisions could be made on the proposals by the Federal Subsistence Board May 8 - 10, 2007. The Kenai area proposals have proven to be especially controversial because of the concern over reallocation of fish and game in an area already tightly managed between opportunity and sustainability.

News from the North:

By Carol McIntyre, Northern Representative

People

Robin Corcoran, wildlife biologist, Innoko National Wildlife Refuge, is the new coordinator for Bird Conservation Region #4 for the Boreal Partners in Flight working group.

Nicole Gustine, Wildlife Refuge Specialist, transferred to Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge in November 2006. Before moving to Fairbanks, she was the Education Specialist at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge for five years and obtained her B.S. in Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University in 2001. Nicole's husband, David Gustine, is beginning his Ph.D. (Biological Sciences) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Gary Wheeler, long time Deputy Manager of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is the new Refuge Manager at the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.

News

Citizen Science and Magpies. The Alaska Bird Observatory is starting a citizen science project to document the presence of Black-billed Magpies in interior Alaska. The project is funded by the Alaska Conservation Foundation. For more information contact Trisha Blake (Email: tblake@alaskabird.org).

Innoko National Wildlife Refuge—2006 accomplishments. Staff completed 3 Breeding Bird Survey routes and 2 Alaska Landbird Monitoring Survey sites; banded >1,100 greater white-fronted geese in the annual banding effort (a continuous effort since 1975); sampled approximately 300 northern pintails for H5N1 Avian Influenza; completed 141 ground plots for analysis of effects of the 2005 fires; finalized moose browse protocols through additional pilot study plots; surveyed 3 Gold Rush Era town sites and 15 long-term hunter use sites for invasive plant species; and continued to assess methods for determining beaver colony size during the height of cache construction.

Minto Flats Raptor Survey. Alaska Department of Fish and Game non-game biologist Jack Whitman and Interior Refuges Manager Jason Caikoski conducted a study to develop a technique to inventory and monitor stick-nesting raptors on the Minto Flats State Game Refuge. The refuge, about



35 miles west of Fairbanks, encompasses close to 500,000 acres of diverse habitat. With the help of biologist Kalin Kellie and statistician CiCi Chen, Whitman and Caikoski adapted a geospatial population estimate technique for the raptor nest survey. In the past two years, Whitman and Caikoski detected 270 different nests and estimated that there were more than 400 raptor stick nests on the refuge.

Climate change resolution. On 12 October 2006, the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly adopted Resolution No. 2006-39, a resolution supporting promotion of local awareness of climate change impacts in Alaska. <http://co.fairbanks.ak.us/meetings/resolutions/2006/2006-39.pdf>

Climate Impact meetings. The Alaska Climate Impact Assessment Commission, an entity established by the [Alaska State Legislature](#), met in Fairbanks on December 7 and 8, 2006 and heard presentations from many UAF scientists and local community members.

Proposed federal listing of Polar Bear as threatened. On 27 December 2006, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is proposing to list the polar bear as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act and initiating a comprehensive scientific review to assess the current status and future of the species. The USFWS stated the primary threat to polar bears is the decrease of sea ice coverage due to climate change. The USFWS will use the next 12 months to gather more information, undertake additional analyses, and assess the reliability of relevant scientific models before making a final decision whether to list the species. See <http://www.fws.gov/Endangered/>.

Donation of wolf prey specimens. Denali National Park and Preserve is donating a collection of 1200 wolf prey specimens collected in visits to more than 800 kill sites, visited between 1986 and 1993 to the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. Specimens include skulls, leg bones, mandibles, pelvises and other specimens from moose, caribou and sheep killed or scavenged by wolves and found by radio telemetry.

Who's Counting; how insufficient support for science is hindering National Park wildlife management in Alaska, a report recently released by the National Parks Conservation Association is available at www.npca.org/alaska/wildlife/AlaskaReport.pdf.

Tanana Lakes Recreation Area. TWS Alaska Chapter submitted scoping comments on Master Plan for the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area to Karl Kassel, Director, Parks and Recreation, Fairbanks North Star Borough, on 10 January 2007. The AK Chapter recognized efforts by the Fairbanks North Star Borough to secure funding and public input to remove debris, trash and contaminants; protect critical wildlife habitat; and provide public recreation. The Chapter also provided scoping comments to help guide development and management of this unique area that represents one of the larger remaining wetlands in the city of Fairbanks. The Borough will create a more detailed draft master plan that will be available for public review in early February, at which time another public meeting will be held. Please contact John Haas at 459-1198 or jhaas@co.fairbanks.ak.us to be added to the project's e-mail contact list. See <http://co.fairbanks.ak.us/ParksandRecreation/OngoingProjects/>.

Resolution for creating the Stampede State Recreation Area near Healy, Alaska. The Denali Borough Assembly passed a resolution in support of the Alaska Legislature designating management of the Stampede Road area west of Eight Mile Lake, to the State of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation to create the Stampede State Recreation Area. The resolution was adopted quickly at the January 10, 2007 Borough Assembly meeting. The resolution (07-01) is posted on the Denali Borough web site: <http://www.denaliborough.com>.

Tangle Lakes State Wildlife Refuge. The Copper Basin Advisory Committee submitted Proposal Number 204 asking the Board of Game to recommend that the legislature approve the establishment of a state wildlife refuge near Tangle Lakes on state lands north of Denali Highway between Maclaren River and the Richardson Highway. The purpose of the refuge would be to: (1) Ensure the protection of critical seasonal wildlife habitat; (2) Ensure the conservation of caribou, moose, and other wildlife; (3) Ensure the continued use of these populations for hunting, trapping, and viewing; (4) Ensure continued management consistent with all of Game Management Unit 13; and, (5) Ensure continued protection of archeological areas and their artifacts. To further these purposes, the proposal would disallow hard-rock mining. The proposal was developed in part to protect the Nelchina caribou herd. You can read the proposal at <http://www.boards.adfg.state.ak.us/gameinfo/meeinfo/2006-2007/PropBook-March07.pdf>. To



comment on this proposal send your comments to:
Attn: BOG Comments, Alaska Department of Fish
and Game, Boards Support Section, P.O. Box
115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526, Fax: 907-465-6094.

National TWS News

From Wildlife Policy News

Forest Plans Exempted from NEPA Review. After two years of debate, the U.S. Forest Service has decided that forest plans are no longer required to undergo National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review. In effect 15 December 2006, the rule allows the Forest Service to instead issue categorical exclusions for forest plans based on its decision that the plans do not have a direct impact on the environment. Plans that make a final decision on allowable actions will not be eligible for such categorical exclusions and the Forest Service will still conduct NEPA reviews for individual projects. Defenders of Wildlife and Forest Guardians have filed a lawsuit against the Forest Service (*Defenders of Wildlife, et al., v. Gail Kimbell, et al.*, 30 January 2007) on the grounds that the new rule violates NEPA, with a goal of preventing the rule from being applied to any future forest management plans. (See the rest of the article at <http://www.wildlife.org/policy/index.cfm?tname=wpnv17&issue=v17i1>).

Meetings and Announcements

The Northwest Section and Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society joint conference will be held 18-21 March 2007, at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center in Canmore, Alberta, Canada. The deadline for submission of abstracts is 15 February. A registration form can be downloaded from www.albertadirectory.com/actws.

Boreal forest disturbance meeting in Fairbanks. The international conference "Climate Change Impacts on Boreal Forest Disturbance Regimes" will be held on the Fairbanks campus during 30 May to 2 June 2007 (<http://www.icddbf.uaf.edu/>). Abstracts were due 31 December.

COWCH interview. In December, Tom Paragi and Roger Kaye interviewed Charles Gray of Fairbanks for the program *Conserving Our Wildlife Conservation Heritage*. Mr. Gray was a military game warden at Fort Wainwright in the early 1950s, became a pilot and big game hunting guide, and for

several years was editor of the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*. He was actively involved in wildlife issues from before statehood (including testimony in favor of establishing the Arctic National Wildlife Range) through the period leading up to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

Wanted: Chapter webmaster and good quality images for Chapter website. TWS is making progress on providing the means for Chapters to maintain their own websites on the TWS server. We are recruiting a Chapter Webmaster to post files (eg. positions, correspondence) and maintain website information (eg. announcement of annual meeting) typically once a month. Also, each quarter we would like to update the image on our website to keep it fresh. If you have the skills and can help the Alaska Chapter maintain its website, or you have an image or two that you would like to submit (photo credit will be given), please contact tom_paragi@fishgame.state.ak.us.

State of the Arctic Report Released Online. This report from October 2006 (<http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/pubs/PDF/rich2952/rich2952.pdf>) is a review of environmental conditions during the past five years relative to those in the latter part of the 20th century and updates some of the records from the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment. The review was conducted by an international group of twenty scientists who developed a consensus on information content and reliability.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. A 21-page summary for policy makers from the IPCC Working Group 1 was recently finalized. You can view it at <http://www.ipcc.ch/pub/spm22-01.pdf>. The IPCC Working Group 2 report on impacts and adaptation will be released in April.

13th Annual TWS Conference T-Shirts! We have a small number of extra t-shirts from the recent national conference in Anchorage. They are Hanes Beefy-T's in an attractive "bluestone" color. \$18.00 each plus \$4.00 shipping for 1-2 shirts, \$6.00 shipping for 3-4 shirts. We have one or two extra in most sizes. Please respond to Deb Rudis at 907-780-1183 or deborah_rudis@fws.gov if you would like a shirt, payment by check can then follow. (Three shirts are being held back as door prizes for the annual business meeting in Juneau.)



Comment letter on NE NPR-A. Once again the Alaska Chapter drafted a comment letter, signed by TWS Executive Director Michael Hutchison on 8 January 2007, that addressed continuing conservation concerns related to energy exploration in the Northeast section of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Eric Taylor worked with several Alaska Chapter members to draft the letter, which will be posted to the AK Chapter website.

2007 Alaska Envirothon—Wildlife Coordinator Sought. The Alaska Envirothon is a statewide

environmental competition in high schools. The Wildlife Coordinator would be responsible for preparing study material for schools and writing and administering an exam. Two people could team up as Wildlife Coordinators. This is a great opportunity to get to know the local youth around the state, and be involved in a hands-on competition that has career building potential for these young people. For more information, contact Cassidee Hall (907)479-2657 ext. 114 and see <http://www.alaskaswcds.org/Envirothon.html> and <http://www.envirothon.org/>.

Outcome of Bear Technical Reviews

By Tom Paragi

Technical review of bear predation. When a draft position on bear management in September 2004 was not adopted because of strong disparity in member comments, I received approval by the previous Executive Board to recruit committees for technical reviews on three separate topics (sale of bear parts, bear predation management, and bear baiting). The review on sale of bear parts was approved last September and is on our website. The draft technical review addressing bear predation on moose calves was reviewed by the previous Executive Board in January 2006, and comments were given back to the review committee of Rod Boertje (chair), Becky Kelleyhouse, Steve Kovach, and Patrick Valkenburg. The committee submitted a revised document in September that was sent to all members for comments and a vote to accept or reject. I received votes from 31 members by 1 November, and 18 of those members provided comments. The member vote for approval was 16 in favor and 14 opposed with 1 who abstained but provided comments. However, the majority decision by the Board was to not accept the review because several Chapter and Board members believed it was necessary for the review to more fully address the potential effects of predator control programs on bear populations in a review of bear predation management.

The committee authors expressed disappointment that the Board did not accept the review, pointing out that they had addressed the topic that was assigned to them and incorporated comments from the January 2006 Board review in the revision. Rod gave recommendations on how the Board should avoid future pitfalls with the process of technical reviews, among them that a detailed technical review (in this case 35 pages) should undergo critique by specialists in the topic field similar to referees in a journal article.

In making the transition from a brief and broad position statement to more detailed and specific technical reviews in spring 2005, I failed to develop a “contract” between the Board and each of the three committees to clarify topics of the review, thus set expectations of the review scope and product outcome for Chapter members. The topic “bear control to enhance ungulate populations” has several facets of predator and prey ecology as well as the applied ecology and social/economic components of management systems. On such a controversial subject, input by membership would have been valuable in setting the scope of the review that would have been spelled out in a “contract.” I also now realize that “arm twisting” to fill committees is not advisable because the technical reviews involved more time and energy than position statements. To the extent that qualified individuals were reluctant to participate, some Chapter members perceived a bias in the committee composition. My experience with this review was a frustrating lesson in leadership. I do extend sincere appreciation to Rod, Becky, Steve, and Patrick for their work on the review.

I communicated with TWS President John Organ about procedures for technical reviews. TWS does technical reviews by appointing qualified individuals (volunteers) to produce a draft, which is reviewed for approval by Council without member comment. However, TWS Council can recruit help from over 7,000 members and has sometimes gone outside the organization, whereas we have a membership of 250. In addition to defining expectations up front and choosing a knowledgeable and balanced committee, John recommended that a



Chapter undertaking a technical review on a contentious issue might engage a couple independent reviewers to treat the document as would journal referees. He felt that extra step may be necessary to address concerns of whether "the Chapter can stand behind the science"--good advice should we attempt technical reviews in the future.

Technical review of bear baiting. In light of our experience with the bear predation review, I talked with Dick Shideler, who has chaired the committee on the review of bear baiting. We agreed to terminate the baiting technical review because there has been little progress on that topic since spring 2005, primarily due to the busy schedule of the committee members. Dick will provide an outline and the collected information to a future committee that may wish to address the topic.

Education & Information Committee Report--Spreading the Word

By Jimmy Fox

There is no shortage of conservation issues needing our attention in Alaska, and the Education & Information Committee has been doing double-time. Dave Person, Dick Shideler, Tom Paragi, Eric Taylor, Tara Wertz and I have been busy developing and implementing methods to inform the public and policy makers of basic wildlife management concepts, and activities and interests of TWS and the Alaska Chapter. Over the last few months we've been working on the following topics:

1. *Endangered Species Act.* Dave Person and Dick Shideler are working on a paper that highlights the importance of the Act, and Alaska success stories. The article will be submitted by President Paragi to local newspapers as a guest opinion piece.
2. *Tanana Lakes Recreation Area.* We drafted a letter to the Fairbanks North Star Borough regarding the development of a master plan for the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area in south Fairbanks (see <http://www.co.fairbanks.ak.us/ParksandRecreation/OngoingProjects/>). President Paragi submitted the letter on 10 January 2007 and copies were provided to the Alaska Bird Observatory, Alaska Center for the Environment, Alaska Conservation Voters, AK DNR Habitat Division--Fairbanks Office, Alaska Flyfishers, Alaska Outdoor Council, Audubon--Alaska & Fairbanks chapters, Ducks Unlimited--Fairbanks, Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau, Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Ruffed Grouse Society--Fairbanks, Sierra Club--Alaska, and The Nature Conservancy--Alaska to help build consensus on the importance of responsibly using this area's habitat and wildlife. We thank Alaska Chapter members Larry Bright, Mark Lindberg, Ann Ruggles, Ken Whitten, and the Executive Board for their excellent input and review of the letter.
3. *State of Alaska Legislators.* After November's elections, we sent letters to Alaska's new and returning state representatives and senators to introduce them to TWS and the Alaska Chapter. We then invited them to an open house to be held in early February (see *Message from the President*).

With an increasing number of members, the Alaska Chapter should step up efforts to educate the public and policymakers about wildlife and habitat issues of concern. If you have an issue you would like to have the chapter address, or you would like to get involved in committee activities, please contact me at jfox1990@alaska.net. Remember to visit the Alaska Chapter Web site (www.wildlife.org) to view official chapter correspondence.

Member Contributions

(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, the Alaska Chapter TWS, or the contributor's employers.)



Powerpointlessness

By Dave Person

All of you have probably experienced something like this at a conference or meeting:

The title of the presentation is intriguing, "Feeding the snot-nosed dimwit: optimum foraging or paradigm shift?" Whoa, a paradigm shift! I have to see this one. The title even has a colon so I am sure it will be something that stimulates my festering intellect. The speaker walks up to the podium and clicks on the first Powerpoint slide. The title looms in bright orange "FEEDING THE DIMWIT.....OPTIMUM SNOT FORAGING.....". The poor embarrassed speaker apologizes saying the text formatting in his version of Windows Powerpoint must not be compatible with the latest version on the conference computer. The little voice in my head, that always seems to speak to me with a heavy New Jersey accent, says "Dis ain't lookin' too good boss. Maybe yooo should leave now huh?" But I am packed in amongst all the others eagerly awaiting the paradigm shift. The speaker proceeds through an interminable sequence of Powerpoint bulleted lists of objectives and hypotheses. Each one animatedly zooms onto the screen when he presses the remote button. My mind asks, "Cool, but what is the paradigm to be shifted?" He drones on for the next 5 minutes about methods. It dawns on me. This is suspiciously like a MASTER'S THESIS!! Master's theses rarely offer paradigm shifts. I've been duped.

The screen goes blank. The little voice in my head says, "Uh oh. He was tawking too long and forgot to toin off the screen sayva function." I nod energetically in response, hoping the person next to me doesn't notice my behavior. Next comes the GIS map. There is always a GIS map, but this one has areas that blink on an off when the speaker points to them. Whoa, way cool. I am now no longer listening because I am wondering if yellow really is the appropriate background for the blinking lime green highlights. I start thinking, has this guy ever read Edward Tufte's book "The Visual Display of Quantitative Information"¹ or his essay "The Cognitive Style of Powerpoint?"² Tufte despises the simplistic linear mode of presentation produced by Powerpoint. It results in endless streams of slides, each containing 2 or 3 short pithy statements in BIG colorful type. So what did he say back on slide 67? Then there are the graphic templates, special effects, and clip art that convey nothing.

Generally, the more graphics, clip art and animation in a program the less real stuff the speaker has to present. In my opinion, a good presentation is like telling a good story that has a logical beginning, middle, and end. A good story doesn't need a lot of fancy graphics or bells and whistles. One of the best presentations that I ever gave had no slides or graphics at all. That was because, being an idiot, I packed my slides in my luggage for a trip to a conference in Mexico. My bag got lost so I had to wing it. I had a good story to tell, I knew the material cold, and I adapted my talk to the conditions. The talk was a success because people actually listened to my words instead of focusing on the slides.

It is now 18 minutes into the 20-minute talk. The speaker finally gets to the results, an astounding slide showing an immensely busy table of 50 models identified by barely interpretable acronyms along with AIC scores and weights. "We tested 10 covariates and compared 125 models including interaction terms.....". Oh my god, we go from information starvation to overwhelming gibberish! I am still trying to figure out the acronym for the second model listed when the speaker says, " And so we conclude that our results show that food selection by snot-nosed dimwits is opportunistic feeding not optimum foraging, at least during our study, at the density of dimwits that we observed, and on Tuesday mornings unless it rained. Nonetheless, due to our small sample we urge caution in extrapolating our conclusions to other dimwits." That's IT? That's the paradigm shift? I suffered through a bad case of Akaike Information Constipation for that? I look at the program and note the next talk is titled "Range expansion of the smelly-bottomed lemming: important implications for conservation of biodiversity in the Arctic". Humm, another title with a colon. My little voice says "time to go Jefe" and I get up and leave. I crave something with substance so I go back to my room and eat a twinkie.

1. Tufte, E. R. 2001. The visual display of quantitative information. Graphics Press, Cheshire, Connecticut, USA. 197p.

2. Tufte, E. R. 2003. The cognitive style of PowerPoint. Graphics Press, Cheshire, Connecticut, USA. 25p.



A Joint Meeting of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society and the 12th Northern Furbearer Conference, Juneau, Alaska, 16-19 April 2007.

Join fellow wildlife researchers, managers, educators, students, and administrators from across the state and region for a joint meeting of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society and Northern Furbearer Conference. The theme of this year's conference is "Wildlife Conservation in a Changing Landscape: Finding Common Ground". The meeting will feature presentations by agency biologists, university professors and students, and private sector consultants and biologists. Topics presented will be useful to better conserve wildlife resources in a rapidly changing environment. This is a great opportunity for wildlife biologists in Alaska and neighboring areas to share their work and insights with colleagues and members of the public. The conference will be held at the Centennial Hall, in downtown Juneau, Alaska.

Pre-Conference Workshop - 16 April

Conservation Genetics for Natural Resource Managers. This short, 1-day course will be taught by Dr. Lisette Waits (<http://www.cnrhome.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=72862>), from the University of Idaho. This course is designed to provide an overview of the field of conservation genetics by describing the multiple ways in which genetic analysis can be effectively used in conservation and management. The course is designed to help resource managers determine which genetic methods are appropriate for addressing different types of research questions and to critically evaluate conservation genetic data and publications. See below or more detailed workshop information.

Wildlife Society Conference - 17-18 April

Plenary Session. The Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society presents a Plenary Session entitled: *Toward a global perspective on the economies of natural resources*. The plenary session will feature a presentation by Dr. Brian Czech entitled *Humans in the Economy of Nature, Including a Special Role for Wildlife Professionals*. Brian is a certified wildlife biologist who works with the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a conservation biologist, is president of the Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy, adjunct professor with Virginia Tech University, offering a course in ecological economics, and author of the book *Shoveling Fuel for a Runaway Train: Errant Economists, Shameful Spenders, and a Plan to Stop Them All*. The plenary session will include a panel of speakers who will offer a range of perspectives on the topic, which will be followed by a question and discussion period. For more information contact Winston Smith (winstonsmith@fs.fed.us).

Technical Sessions. There will be four technical sessions, including special sessions focused on small mammal conservation and marine mammal ecology. Presentations will be 15 minutes in length and include time for a limited question and answer period. **The deadline for submission of abstracts is March 15.** Information on formatting and submitting abstracts can be found on the website: www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak/index.cfm. We hope you will make a presentation at the conference, and that you will encourage your colleagues to do so as well. For more information contact Jamie Womble (Jamie.Womble@nps.gov).

Small Mammal Conservation Session. Managers, researchers and conservationists are invited to a half-day special session to explore "*The Functional Role of Small Mammals in Ecosystems*," with an emphasis on current small mammal research and conservation in Alaska. This technical session will include invited and contributed presentations and will conclude with discussion about the formation of a statewide Small Mammal Working Group to facilitate collaboration, information sharing, and coordination to achieve high priority conservation needs. Depending on audience response, a list-serve for participants interested in small mammals could be established, as well as a web presence, information clearinghouse, and perhaps an annual report summary and follow-up meeting. Contact Mary Rabe (mary_rabe@fishgame.state.ak.us) for more information.

Marine Mammal Ecology Session. Depending on the number of abstracts received we intend to coordinate a session focused on marine mammal ecology. We invite interested individuals to submit an abstract for an oral or



poster presentation on topics relating to research and/or conservation of marine mammals. For more information contact Jamie Womble (jamie_womble@nps.gov) or Aleria Jensen (Aleria.Jensen@noaa.gov).

Poster Session. The poster session will be held on 17 April from 5:00 - 7:00 PM in the ballroom. Beer, wine, and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Posters will remain on display throughout the conference and a prize will be awarded for the best poster. Posters should be a maximum of 48" wide by 60" high and should include a recent photo of the presenter. Mounting supplies will be provided. Tips on producing a poster can be found at <http://www.wildlife.org/conference/index.cfm?tname=posterguidelines>. For more information on submitting a poster contact Karen Blejwas (karen_blejwas@fishgame.state.ak.us) or Karin McCoy (karin_mccoy@fishgame.state.ak.us).

TWS Business Meeting. An Alaska Chapter business meeting will be held during lunch on 18 April. All members are encouraged to attend, and free pizza will be provided. Please send agenda items to tom_paragi@fishgame.state.ak.us by 1 April.

Working Group Meetings. The conference will also feature meetings hosted by the moose habitat ecology and Alaska amphibian working groups. These separate meetings will provide an opportunity for participants to interact, share research findings and discuss conservation issues about specific topics.

The moose-habitat ecology working group will include technical presentations about moose foraging ecology, field and laboratory techniques, estimating carrying capacity, and management case studies. The presentations will form the basis for continued discussions about current conservation issues and research priorities. A field trip to the Gustavus forelands is being offered on 20 April. For more information contact Kevin White (kevin_white@fishgame.state.ak.us).

The Alaska amphibian working group will hold a meeting to share results of ongoing amphibian research, discuss current conservation needs, and formally establish a cooperative, multi-agency network to address future statewide conservation and research needs for amphibians. The meeting agenda will include informal and brief research updates as well as roundtable discussion on key topics. For more information contact Sanjay Pyare (sanjay_pyare@uas.alaska.edu) or David Tessler (david_tessler@fishgame.state.ak.us).

Banquet and Keynote Speaker. The banquet will be held on 18 April, 6:30 PM, at the Westmark Baranof Inn, (129 N. Franklin St.) in downtown Juneau. Dinner will be preceded by a cash bar starting at 6:00 PM. The price of the banquet is \$35 per person for a surf-and-turf dinner and dessert. Conference attendees are welcome to bring a guest, and additional banquet tickets can be purchased along with your conference registration. Nick Jans will be the featured speaker at this year's banquet. Nick is a contributing editor for Alaska magazine and a member of USA Today's Board of Editorial Contributors. He has written for Rolling Stone, Backpacker, and the Christian Science Monitor. His books include *Tracks of the Unseen: Meditations on Alaska Wildlife, Landscape, and Photography; A Place Beyond: Finding Home in Arctic Alaska; The Last Light Breaking: Living Among Alaska's Inupiat Eskimos*; and most recently, *The Grizzly Maze*. He currently resides in Juneau, Alaska.

12th Northern Furbearer Conference - 19 April

The last day of the conference will focus on the ecology and management of furbearers in Alaska and northern Canada. We invite interested individuals to submit an abstract for an oral or poster presentation (see Technical Sessions above for submission details) on topics relating to research and/or conservation of furbearers. For more information contact Rod Flynn (rod_flynn@fishgame.state.ak.us).

STUDENT TRAVEL AWARDS:

In order to encourage active student participation at the conference travel grants will be available to students who are members of the Alaska or UAF TWS Chapters. If you are not currently a member simply sign up, pay your \$5 dues and you are eligible. Travel scholarships will be awarded on a first-come first-served basis, with preference for students that are presenting papers or posters at the conference. Students traveling from the Anchorage area can receive a \$100 travel award, while students traveling from the Fairbanks area and beyond will be



eligible for a \$200 award. Contact Kristen Romanoff (kristen_romanoff@fishgame.state.ak.us) to apply for student travel awards.

TRAVEL AND LODGING:

Travel in and out of Juneau is via Alaska Airlines (www.alaskaair.com) or by Alaska Marine Highway Ferry (www.dot.state.ak.us/amhs), which connects to the state road system in Haines and Skagway. Conference participants are eligible for a 10% discount on airfares via Alaska Airlines. **When making reservations use the special e-certificate code: ECCMA0856.** Please contact Doug Larsen (doug_larsen@fishgame.state.ak.us) for additional details.

A limited number of rooms have been reserved at special conference rates at the following hotels. They are available on a first come basis, so book your reservation early. Be sure to mention the conference for these rates. All are within easy walking distance to the conference center.

Westmark Baranof (907-586-2660): \$119 per night for a single
www.westmarkhotels.com/locations/juneau/juneau.html

Goldbelt (907-586-6900): \$104-\$109 per night
www.goldbelttours.com

Prospector (907-586-3737): \$99-\$129 per night

Other hotel options near the airport (~14 miles from conference) include the Travelodge (907-789-9700)--\$80 per night for a single; Frontier Suites (907-790-6600)--\$81 per night for a single; and Super 8 (907-789-4858)--\$77 per night for a single. For those on a tight budget, consider the downtown Juneau International Hostel (\$10/night), 907-586-9559, www.juneauhostel.org/.

CONFERENCE COSTS:

A mail-in registration form is available on the last page of this newsletter, or you may also register online at <https://secure.alaskamade.com/aktws/>. **Please note that registration increases from \$135 to \$170 after 1 April.** A one-day registration is also available (\$60 regular, \$5 student/retired). The Conservation Genetics Workshop fee is \$135 and the Banquet fee is \$35. The Registration fees cover facilities costs, conference catering, and meeting materials. Once payment is made, you will receive a confirmation and receipt by e-mail or regular mail. Registration materials will be available at the conference beginning April 17, and will include abstracts, banquet tickets, name tag and Juneau visitor information.

2007 MOOSE HABITAT ECOLOGY WORKING GROUP MEETING:

This meeting will take place on April 18. The intent of this working group is to provide a forum for communication among biologists about topics related to moose-habitat ecology in Alaska. The working group meeting will be open to all interested individuals.

Meeting Program. The working group meeting will consist of a set of invited presentations by research and management biologists. These sessions will serve to update the current state of our knowledge about moose-habitat ecology, tools and techniques used to acquire and analyze field and/or laboratory data and approaches used to manage moose and their habitat in Alaska. Following this, an organized discussion will take place in which issues, problems and/or knowledge gaps will be addressed. The outcome of these efforts is intended to be of substantial practical value for individuals engaged in both research and management activities.

Field Trip. Depending upon participant interest, a 1-day field trip to the Gustavus forelands may be organized for 20 April. The Gustavus forelands are located about 40 miles west of Juneau and are accessed by air charter. The Gustavus forelands currently support an extremely high moose population density and are close to or above habitat carrying capacity. Intensive research and management activities are currently taking place in this area. A field trip to this area would provide opportunities to learn about techniques used for estimating forage availability and utilization in addition to evaluating the effects of intense moose herbivory on plant



communities. Local biologists will also be on hand to discuss other aspects of moose research activities and current approaches used for managing this population. The cost of this field trip would be between \$155-175 (the cost of RT airfare to the site) and be limited to 9-18 individuals. Please contact Kevin White (kevin_white@fishgame.state.ak.us) by 1 April if you are interested in the field trip.

Request for Feedback. The intention of the working group meeting is to create an opportunity for biologists to increase their understanding and appreciation of topics related to moose habitat ecology in Alaska. In order to make this meeting as useful as possible please do not hesitate to offer ideas, advice or comments about how the meeting can be improved. The meeting agenda (see website) is still in draft form and the opportunity to contribute a presentation is still available, for those interested. Contact: Kevin White (kevin_white@fishgame.state.ak.us).

WORKSHOP: CONSERVATION GENETICS FOR RESOURCE MANAGERS

Time and Place: 8:30 am-5:30pm, 16 April 2006, Egan Conference Room, Centennial Hall, Juneau, AK.

Instructor. Dr. Lisette Waits is a faculty member at the University of Idaho, Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (<http://www.cnrhome.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=72862>). Dr. Waits teaches a number of courses at UI, including: Conservation Biology, Conservation Genetics, and Interdisciplinary Research in Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Production. In addition, Dr. Waits is the Co-Director for the Center for Research on Invasive Species and Small Populations, and is affiliated with the UI Laboratory for Conservation and Ecological Genetics, the IGERT Doctoral program in Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Production, and the Initiative for Bioinformatics and Evolutionary Studies (IBEST). Her professional interests include conservation genetics, conservation biology, and molecular ecology.

Course Description. Conservation genetics has become an important tool in studies of animal and plant populations. Genetic methods are currently being used to uncover taxonomic relationships, to define distinct population segments and evolutionary significant units, to determine migration and gene flow patterns, to evaluate population viability, to detect hybridization, to better understand behavior and mating systems, to estimate population sizes, and to identify presence absence of endangered species. As a result, genetic data plays an important role in conservation and management decisions. Increasingly managers are faced with incorporating and interpreting genetic results into biological research and management plans. However, very few managers have been exposed to the many technical and theoretical details of genetic analysis. This short course is designed to provide an overview of the field of conservation genetics by describing the multiple ways in which genetic analysis can be effectively used in conservation and management. The course is designed to help resource managers determine which genetic methods are appropriate for addressing different types of research questions and to critically evaluate conservation genetic data and publications. Course material will include a brief overview of terminology and molecular methods, and will cover topics such as: genetic diversity, gene flow evaluation, approaches for defining management units, non-invasive genetic sampling, and population estimation. Basic theory and methods that are used to address research questions in conservation genetics and molecular ecology will be discussed for each topic area. Case studies and small group discussions of data are used extensively to illustrate the usefulness of genetic approaches to conservation and management and to explain genetic methods. Dr. Waits will also provide opportunities to discuss concerns specific to participants, such as study designs for future projects, potential uses for previously collected data, and questions related to material covered during the workshop itself.

Cost. \$125 per person

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AT CHAPTER WEBSITE:

To download the registration form, Call for Abstracts, or Conference Flyer, go to the AK Chapter Website at <http://www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak/index.cfm>.



**ALASKA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
and the
12th NORTHERN FURBEARER CONFERENCE
MEETING and CONFERENCE**

**CENTENNIAL HALL
JUNEAU, ALASKA
APRIL 16 – 19, 2007**

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____ E-mail: _____

Please fill in all that apply:

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Regular | \$ 135.00 _____ |
| Late Registration (after April 1) | \$ 170.00 _____ |
| Student/Retired Registration - Daily Rate | \$ 5.00 _____ |
| Regular Registration - Daily Rate | \$ 60.00 _____ |
| Banquet (per person) | \$ 35.00 _____ |
| Conservation Genetics Workshop | \$ 125.00 _____ |
| TOTAL | \$ _____ |

I am a full-time student requesting a travel award to attend this conference.

Please make checks out to the **Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society** and send checks and registrations to Karen Blejwas: email – karen_blejwas@fishgame.state.ak.us; mailing address – P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526; Fax - (907) 465-6142. Please also direct questions concerning registration to Karen at (907) 465-4148. Beginning February 1, on-line registration is also available at <https://secure.alaskamade.com/aktws/>.

2007 Membership Subscription and Renewal

New memberships and renewals for the 2007 calendar year are available on-line at The Wildlife Society's store (<https://store.wildlife.org/>). An individual may renew their TWS membership (\$64 regular, \$32 student or retired) as well as their NW Section (\$5.00) and Alaska Chapter (\$5.00) memberships. In addition, journals can be ordered (delivered on-line or on-line and print) and TWS members can join one or more of the 18 TWS working groups. A new Family membership is available this year (\$103). Also new this year--all members will receive *The Wildlife Professional* magazine in addition to *The Wildlifer* newsletter.