



The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of
The Wildlife Society

November 2008



Highlights in This Issue

- *Message from president Howard Golden*
- *News from around the state*
- *Ingestion of spent lead ammunition: Implications for wildlife and humans*
- *Announcements*
- *Membership Contributions:*
 - Making the case for cumulative impacts assessment.

Message from President Howard Golden

Position Statements

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: The revision of the ANWR position statement was completed and approved by our Chapter members by a vote of 50 to 3. I again want to congratulate and thank committee chair Dick Shideler and members Steve Arthur, Eric Taylor, Brad Griffith, and John Schoen for a job well done! The position statement is now under review by TWS Council for its adoption as a TWS position statement. Following a review by TWS membership, we hope to see a final this spring. We will post the new position statement on our website.

I'm very pleased to announce that several Chapter members have volunteered and were appointed to revise and update two existing position statements. Kyle Joly, Mark Bertram, Wade Willis, and Nick Demma will address Intensive Management of Big Game. Selection of committee members to tackle the Wildlife Management by Ballot Initiative position statement is nearly complete and will be announced soon. Both committees will strive to have drafts ready for Executive Board and member review by April 2009. Progress continues with the position statement on "*Disease risk of using pack goats in alpine areas of Alaska*".

Alaska Chapter Donations

The Executive Board recently approved donations to a couple of worthy causes. The Alaska Chapter donated \$300 to the TWS 2008 Conference in Miami. This is a similar donation to those we've made in the past, which we know from having hosted the conference in 2006, is always helpful to the organizers.

We also donated \$250 to the TWS Leadership Institute. The Leadership Institute was established in 2006 "to prepare the next generation of wildlife professionals to move into management and leadership positions." It's geared toward young professionals who have been out of school for 2-3 years, are currently employed full or part-time in wildlife management or conservation, and can show evidence of leadership potential. Participants are selected by a committee of TWS members and engage in distance learning opportunities, hands-on activities, workshops, and intensive mentoring from more seasoned professionals. Participants are then monitored during their careers to determine the program's success. The assessment by TWS so far is that the institute has been very successful. The Executive Board and I strongly encourage any recent wildlife grads who meet the requirements to apply for this opportunity in professional growth. Find out more at the following website: http://joomla.wildlife.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=147&Itemid=175

Member Privacy and Contact Lists

At the Alaska Chapter meeting in 2002, there was a discussion about electronic distribution of Chapter information, newsletters, and member contact information. Several members expressed concern about the potential for the membership list to find its way to nonmembers and even spammers. Options of a screening system for contact lists and of a protected password for members only were discussed. It was concluded that a protocol should be pursued. However, in my search of the history on this matter, it appears that a formal policy was never adopted by the Chapter.



In addition, I found out that TWS also lacks a formal policy about distributing contact lists. TWS receives many requests for access to member contact information. Most inquiries are from section or chapter officers, but they also get them from other members. I was told that TWS always checks to make sure the person making the request is an active member. However, TWS also occasionally sells access to their membership list to some conservation organizations and publishers as a fundraising mechanism. Members used to be asked if they wanted to allow access to their contact information, but now with the electronic application process, member names are automatically included in the TWS directory.

The AK Chapter Executive Board was concerned that member privacy could be at risk without their knowledge or agreement. We recently voted to bring this issue forward so that you could advise us regarding : (1) the establishment of a formal Alaska Chapter policy on member privacy and the use and distribution of contact lists; and (2) petitioning TWS to adopt a member privacy policy that allows members to decide if and how their contact information may be distributed.

Please vote for one of the following options regarding distribution of member contact lists and send your responses and comments to Karyn Rode (karyn_rode@fws.gov) by November 30, 2008.

- A. Limit access of member contact information to the AK Chapter Executive Board only.
- B. Provide renewing members or new applicants the option to allow access to their contact information by active TWS members only.
- C. Provide renewing members or new applicants the option to allow access to their contact information by active TWS members AND by third parties selected by TWS.
- D. Write in other options: _____

Depending on the advice we receive from you, we will work with the Northwest Section to petition TWS Council to adopt a formal policy on member privacy and the use of membership lists by TWS.

“We abuse land because we see it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” – Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac (1949) – submitted by Howard Golden

Do you have a favorite quote about wildlife conservation which would be of interest to the members? Please submit it to the newsletter editor or your Regional Representative (noting source) for possible use (where needed) in the newsletter.

News from Southeast:

By Dave Person, Southeast Representative

A hearty thank you is extended to Steve Brockmann (FWS), Tania Lewis (NPS), Susan Oehlers (USFS), Jim King, Doug Larsen (ADFG), Michelle Kissling (USFWS) and Mary Rabe (ADFG) for providing the following news.

People

Bruce Halstead, field supervisor of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service field office in Juneau, retired in January 2008. **Steve Brockmann** and **Bill Hanson** have been taking turns filling in as acting supervisors until the position is filled.

Ron Clarke retired from his position as assistant director of the ADFG Division of Wildlife Conservation after serving 2 years in that difficult capacity. Ron is an avid falconer and hunter and is hopefully pursuing those avocations in his new home in California.

Terry Haynes retired after 26 years working for the Subsistence Division of ADFG. Terry was an invaluable voice for the department and for the citizens of Alaska during discussions and negotiations between state and federal partners involved with regulations and policies related to subsistence. He will be enjoying his retirement in the vicinity of Fairbanks.

Matt Kirchhoff retired from his position as research wildlife biologist with the ADFG nongame and endangered species program at the end of September. He and his wife moved to Anchorage in October and he is currently working as senior biologist with Audubon



Alaska overseeing statewide programs for the conservation of birds.

News

Glacier Bay National Park Bears

National Park Service wildlife biologist Tania Lewis has completed a draft bear management plan for the park. It is still under review but will be published for public comment by next summer. In collaboration with University of Alaska-Fairbanks and UAF-Southeast (UAF and UAS), park staff are conducting a 2-year study of black and brown bears that inhabit the shoreline zones of Glacier Bay. They will be examining bear distribution in relation to post-glacial plant and stream succession and effects of vessel-based bear viewing on brown bears. For more information contact Tania (Tania_Lewis@nps.gov).

Aleutian Terns

U.S. Forest Service biologist Susan Oehlers and wildlife technician Nate Catterson are attempting to develop a robust method to estimate the population of Aleutian terns within the Yakutat Black Sand Spit colony. Aleutian terns are considered species of concern by ADFG, Audubon Alaska, FWS, and the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan. The USFS is considering listing it as a sensitive species. Currently, there are few accurate population estimates for the species anywhere within Alaska. Susan and Nate hope to develop a sampling protocol that would be applicable to other areas in the state. Their work is funded by the USFS and grants from ADFG's nongame wildlife grant fund and NSF. They are collaborating with Matt Kirchhoff (ADFG), Mike Goldstein (USFS), and Sanjay Pyare (UAS), and receiving assistance from FWS, Audubon Alaska, Yakutat Salmon Board, and local native communities. For more information please contact Susan Oehlers (soehlers@fs.fed.us).

Nongame Program in SE

In addition to the Aleutian tern project at Yakutat, the nongame program is funding or assisting the following projects in SE Alaska:

1. Genetic diversity of marbled murrelets in Alaska (U. of Wisconsin)
2. Murrelet habitat use and activity patterns at Port Snettisham (Oregon State U.)
3. Phylogeny, taxonomy, and conservation genetics of hoary marmots (UA Museum)
4. Population structure and genetics of spruce grouse in SE Alaska (UAS)

Please contact Mary Rabe (mary.rabe@alaska.gov) for more information about these projects.

Kittlitz's Murrelets

Michelle Kissling (USFWS), Scott Gende (NPS), Steve Lewis (ADFG), and many other collaborators completed another field season studying Kittlitz's murrelets in Icy Bay, Alaska. As in 2007, they attached radio-transmitters to 32 birds in May and located birds throughout the breeding season. New to 2008, they also determined mercury levels for all radio-tagged birds, banded 52 additional individuals, and attached radios to 3 hatch-year birds. They radio-tagged 10 murrelets in late July/early August to observe post-breeding movement. Nick Hatch, who has worked on this project for two years, began a Master's project on murrelet diet composition and reproductive energetics at Oregon State University under Dr. Dan Roby. The Kittlitz's murrelet work in Icy Bay is expected to continue through 2011.

News from Southcentral:

By Todd Rinaldi, Southcentral Representative

People

Lowell Suring, certified Wildlife Biologist who worked as a Wildlife Ecologist with the Forest Service in Alaska for over 20 years, announced his retirement this month from the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Boise, Idaho. He has been an involved member of TWS at all levels throughout his career. Although he is retiring from Federal service, he hopes "to explore opportunities available through contract work and perhaps remain involved with The Wildlife Society."

Elizabeth Solomon, GIS Specialist for the Research Section of ADFG and Chapter Webmaster, gave birth to 6 lb. 8 oz. Finn Alexander Williams on 21 August 2008. Joe Williams, Liz's husband, is a Law Enforcement Ranger with Chugach National Forest.

Shortly after accepting a new position as Polar Bear Biologist with USFWS in Anchorage, **Karyn Rode**, our Chapter Secretary and Treasurer, gave birth to 7 lb. 14 oz. Kai Benjamin Pattison on 23 October 2008. Karen's husband, Robert Pattison, is an ENRI Post Doctorate Fellow in Botany at UAA.

Craig Fleener, a 21 year veteran of the military and former Executive Director of the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments has joined the Department of Fish and Game as their new Director of the Division of Subsistence based in Anchorage. Craig was serving on the Board of Game and has previously



served on the Federal Subsistence Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Committee.

News

Listing of Cook Inlet Belugas. In spite of opposition from the State of Alaska, the Cook Inlet population of Beluga whales has officially been listed under the Endangered Species Act. On 17 October, NOAA announced that despite existing protection measures the population has declined nearly 50% between 1994 and 1998. NOAA estimated the Inlet population to be at 375 individuals for both 2007 and 2008 survey years - a departure from a high of 653 in 1994 and a low of 278 in 2005. Commissioner of Fish and Game Denby Lloyd said "This listing does not provide additional protection for the whales beyond what already exists under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and will require lengthy consultation for many activities now taking place or being planned in Cook Inlet." John Schoen, Senior Scientist of Audubon-Alaska, hopes that "the listing decision is not too late for the Cook Inlet beluga whale population's recovery", and states in an Audubon press release that "it is unfortunate that the population was not listed in 2000, when the scientific evidence was overwhelming that it should be listed under the ESA." For more information, see <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/whales/beluga.htm>

If you have any noteworthy events, projects, promotions, births, retirements, writings, and/or opinions that you would like to share with the Chapter please email them to me at todd.rinaldi@alaska.gov. And don't forget, our Chapter Website now has an [opinion page](#) specifically dedicated for the discussion of topics pertinent to TWS that complements our newsletter.

News from the North:

By Kyle Joly, North Representative

People

Bryce Lake has accepted a wildlife biologist position at Yukon Flats Refuge effective August 17, 2008. Bryce will assume field project, database management, and conservation planning duties.

Bill Schaff, Refuge Manager at Innoko National Wildlife Refuge, will be transferring this fall to become refuge manager for the Alaska Peninsula/Becharof Refuge Complex. Bill started at Innoko in January 2000 as its third manager.

Tevis Underwood, Assistant Refuge Manager at Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, departed to assume duties as Deputy Refuge Manager for Togiak National Wildlife Refuge in Dillingham. Tevis joined the Arctic Refuge staff in 2004. In his tenure at Arctic, Tevis made important contributions to our freshwater and marine aquatic ecology programs, and helped Kaktovik improve polar bear safety in the vicinity of the village.

In July, AK Chapter past-president and ADFG Wildlife Biologist **Tom Paragi** was appointed to the Adaptation Technical Work Group of the Governor's Sub-Cabinet On Climate Change. Tom refers to the Alaska Climate Change Strategy in his "Member Contribution" on p. six.

News

Innoko NWR. The Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) was approved in September; copies are available from the Refuge. The Refuge is currently working on filling its manager position and its deputy refuge manager position remains vacant.

Announcements

Two New Books

Long time Alaskan biologist and pilot **Jim King** of Juneau is the author of the book "*Attending Alaska's Birds: a Wildlife Pilot's Story*" published this year by Trafford Publishing (www.trafford.com). It is a personal memoir covering Jim's 60 years of life, work, and adventure in Alaska. After arriving in Alaska in 1949, Jim worked as a game warden, refuge manager, and waterfowl biologist. The story documents Jim's efforts to establish seven of the State's most important waterfowl refuges. In submitting this item, Dave Person writes: "Congratulations Jim, and thank you for a long life of service conserving Alaska's wild treasures."

Marking the launch of its new book *Caribou and the North: A Shared Future* on October 27, World Wildlife Federation-Canada also announced the commitment of De Beers Canada, a subsidiary of the global diamond mining company, not to conduct activities in barren-ground caribou calving areas in the NWT and Nunavut. <http://wwf.ca/newsroom/index.cfm?uNewsID=1780>

Student Paper Award Winners Announced

At the Anchorage Annual Chapter Conference in April, student paper presentations were evaluated for recognition. The results were inadvertently omitted from the May newsletter. **Andrew Reeves'**

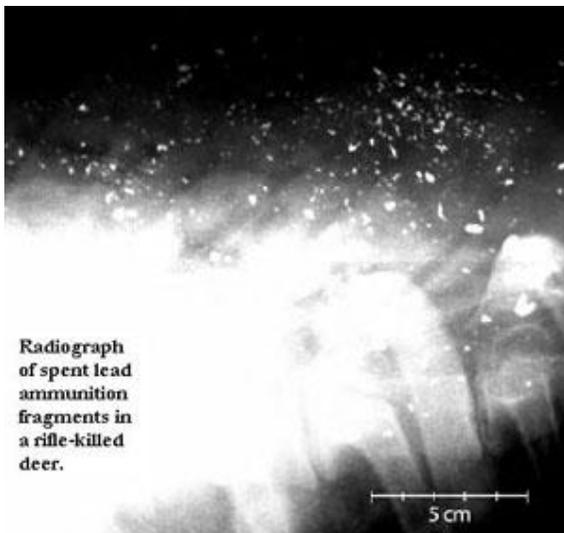


presentation was awarded first place in the competition and **Cortney Pylant** placed second. Congratulations to Andrew and Cortney and thanks to all students who attended the Chapter meeting at a busy time of the school year.

Wildlife Policy Internships Available

TWS announced openings of two Wildlife Policy Internships. Anyone interested in wildlife resource and policy issues may apply. Six-month internships run annually from January to June and from July to December. Applications are now being accepted for January to June 2009. Please see the following website for details: <http://joomla.wildlife.org/>

TWS comments on proposed changes to ESA Section 7 consultations. TWS recently [submitted comments](#) on the Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal to change the regulations governing Section 7 consultations under the ESA. An excerpt from the cover letter states: "The proposed rule sacrifices effectiveness for the sake of efficiency because it bypasses the science that is critical to the consultation process. It delegates to federal action agencies the responsibility and authority to make biological determinations despite the fact that most of those agencies have few staff with biological expertise. As the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has already demonstrated, even the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management - agencies with significant biological expertise - have been unable to make biological assessments in an acceptable manner under the authority delegated to them under the Counterpart Regulations. Delegating this authority to every other federal agency, without regard to the capacity of each agency to undertake these analyses, nearly guarantees decisions that are not biologically defensible and that will jeopardize protected species."



Radiograph of spent lead ammunition fragments in a rifle-killed deer.

Conference Review--Ingestion of spent lead ammunition: implications for wildlife and humans.

By Kim Titus

In May a few Alaska chapter members attended this conference in Boise, Idaho. Ingestion of lead by wildlife is a well-known source of mortality for waterfowl, bald eagles and other birds, but only recently did the Peregrine Fund and some fish and game agencies consider its implications for human health. The issue came to the forefront when California condors in northern Arizona and southern Utah were exposed to large amounts of lead via ingestion of gut piles from hunter-killed deer. This became the genesis for the symposium.

Angela Matz and Paul Flint presented a paper on "Lead isotopes indicated lead shot exposure in Alaska-breeding waterfowl" and Kim Titus, Terry Haynes and Tom Paragi presented a paper on "The importance of moose, caribou, deer and small game in the diets of Alaskans." Lori Verbrugge (State of Alaska epidemiologist), James Berner and Angela Matz presented a paper on "Human exposure to lead from ammunition in the circumpolar north." The latter was a review of "published literature on lead concentrations and lead isotope patterns from circumpolar subsistence users, and similar data from Alaska Native subsistence users, indicating that elevated lead exposure is associated with use of lead shot."

This was an interesting conference with a mix of wildlife and medical professionals. For example, Michael Kosnett from the University of Colorado health science program noted that "restriction or elimination of the nonessential uses of lead is a key preventative strategy that may be taken to reduce the health impact on children and adults." The issue of how much lead might be ingested by humans who consume meat from hunter-killed big game taken with lead bullets was among the most interesting topics to attendees, wildlife and medical professionals and the ammunition industry. A paper by staff from The Peregrine Fund and coauthors attempted to get at this issue. They harvested 30 white-tailed deer in Wyoming under normal hunting circumstances. "Wound x-rays of all 30 eviscerated deer showed metal fragments (median = 136 fragments, range = 15-409) and widespread particle dispersion consistent with a previous study." The authors then took each carcass to a different local commercial meat processor



for standard preparation of boneless steaks and ground meat: “Radiography revealed visible metal particles in the ground meat of 24 (80%) of the 30 deer.”

Medical professionals in other states (e.g., North Dakota) also examined lead fragments in venison and presented interesting findings. More information on the meeting (including abstracts) can be found at http://www.peregrinefund.org/Lead_conference/default.htm. The Peregrine Fund will be publishing a book on the proceedings.

A recent news bulletin concerning consumption of wild game harvested with lead bullets was published by the Minnesota fish and game agency:

www.dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/lead/index.html. In a study of bullet fragmentation in shot sheep carcasses they concluded “given [that] fragments were found so far from the exit wound [up to 18 in], routine trimming likely will not remove all of the fragments and DNR cannot make a recommendation as to how far out trimming should occur.”

Member Contributions—**Note** new web-posting option.

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.

NEW: You no longer need to wait for the next newsletter to share your essays with other members. Submit your contribution to your regional rep; they’ll run it by the Executive Board and, once approved, post it on the Chapter website. It will then typically also be printed in the next newsletter. This is meant to foster more timely discussion on issues and topics of interest.

Making the case for cumulative impact assessment

by Tom Paragi:

A review of the publication:
Making the case for cumulative impact assessment: modeling the potential impacts of climate change, harvesting, oil and gas, and fire by S.H. Yamasaki, R. Duchesneau, F. Doyon, J.S. Russell, and T. Gooding. 2008. *Forestry Chronicle* 84:349-368.

Cumulative impact assessment is a strategy to understand the influence of multiple associated factors on wildlife populations or habitat and is sometimes used to evaluate options for proposed development projects. A recent paper by Yamasaki and coauthors illustrates spatially-explicit simulation of wildland fire risk (as a function of human population growth and climate change) and resource development practices for a timber management area in Alberta. They modeled 9 scenarios of forest disturbance to examine cumulative effects on sustainable wood yield and biodiversity indicators (various metrics of tree species, stage age classes, and forest landscape patches).

Their detailed exercise (humbly described as “an early attempt”) illustrates the value of modeling complex systems as a planning tool prior to capital investment in extractive infrastructure and the development of an associated employment base. All scenarios that included present wildland fire regime and forecasted effect of climate change on fire regime resulted in a decreased wood harvest yield by $\geq 30\%$, even when potential of warmer conditions to increase tree growth was incorporated. Effects of fire and creation of seismic lines for hydrocarbon exploration also increased fragmentation of forests and decreased metrics associated with late-seral stages beyond effects of timber harvest alone. Fragmentation of forest typically causes a decrease in wildlife species diversity in many forest ecosystems (although it can increase productivity of early-seral species that may be desired by humans, such as game animals in temperate and boreal forest).

The authors noted that failure to include the effect of cyclic irruption of spruce budworms on timber supply allowed the forest industry in Quebec to expand to a production level that had to be cut by 20% during an outbreak, resulting in job loss and economic disruption of forest-dependent communities. Similar to case studies of fishing off Newfoundland, political decisions to reduce harvest by a capitalized industry are unpopular and historically have led to overharvest and at least temporary collapse of the resource base when long-term expectations of yield could not be met.

Governor Sarah Palin signed Administrative Order 238 in September 2007 that created a subcabinet to implement the [Alaska Climate Change Strategy](#). Technical advisory groups are presently reviewing the state of information to make policy and funding recommendations by spring 2008 on adaptation and mitigation strategies. Part of this process includes research recommendations to improve forecasting of how changing climate may influence yield of



renewable resources for subsistence users and commodity production. The Yamasaki et al. application may prove useful in future forecasting of climate change effects in Alaska.

Alaska Chapter Leadership

Executive Board

President: Howard Golden, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518-1599, howard.golden@alaska.gov, phone (907) 267-2177, fax (907) 267-2433

President-Elect: Kris Hundertmark, University of Alaska-Fairbanks, PO Box 757000, Fairbanks, AK 99775, ffkh@uaf.edu, phone (907) 474-7159, fax (907) 474-6967

Past-President: Tom Paragi, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701, tom.paragi@alaska.gov; phone (907) 459-7327, fax (907) 459-7332

Secretary-Treasurer: Karyn Rode, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503, karyn_rode@fws.gov, phone (907) 786-3801, fax (907) 786-3816

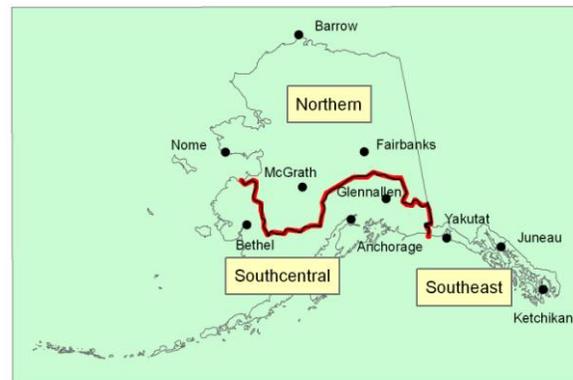
Northern Representative: Kyle Joly, National Park Service, 4175 Geist Road, Fairbanks, AK 99709, kyle_joly@nps.gov, phone (907) 455-0626, fax (907) 455-0602

Southcentral Representative: Todd Rinaldi, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518-1599, todd.rinaldi@alaska.gov, phone (907) 267-2267, fax (907) 267-2433

Southeast Representative: Dave Person, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 2030 Sea Level Drive, Suite 205, Ketchikan, AK 99901, dave.person@alaska.gov, phone (907) 225-2475, fax (907) 225-2771

Newsletter Editor (non-voting): Jim Herriges, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99709-3844, jim_herriges@blm.gov, phone (907) 474-2373, fax (907) 474-2282

UAF Student Chapter TWS Representative (non-voting): Cortney Pylant, 5 Dead End Alley, Fairbanks, AK 99709, fsclp17@uaf.edu



Webmaster

Elizabeth Solomon, ADFG, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518-1599, Elizabeth.solomon@alaska.gov, phone (907) 267-2209

2008 Membership Subscription and Renewal--Online

New memberships and renewals for the 2008 calendar year are available on-line at The Wildlife Society's store (<https://store.wildlife.org/>). An individual may renew their TWS membership (\$66 regular, \$33 student/retired; \$107 family) as well as their NW Section (\$5.00) and Alaska Chapter (\$5.00) memberships (rising to \$10 for 2009).

Membership in TWS is required in order to be a member of the Alaska Chapter. 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. All members will receive *The Wildlife Professional* magazine in addition to *The Wildlifer* newsletter.