



The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of
The Wildlife Society

May 2010



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Message from President Kris Hundertmark

Thanks for a job well done!

As your newly elected President, the first thing I would like to do is thank the outgoing Executive Board members for their service. They did an outstanding job. My next order of business is to welcome the new Executive Board and thank them for their willingness to serve. In addition, I would like to thank Howard Golden, who continues to serve on the Board as Past-President, for looking after the interests of the chapter during my stay in Poland and organizing the annual meeting, which was above and beyond his normal duties. Jerry Hupp, our new President-elect, has hit the ground running, which has made the transition easier. Thank you all!

Howard's service to the Chapter deserves recognition; he had a very successful term as President, leaving large shoes for me to fill. Some accomplishments of the Chapter under Howard's leadership were:

- Finalization of the Chapter's ANWR position statement, that subsequently was adopted by the national office;
- Dedication of funds from a modest dues increase to benefit student programs, those programs then being expanded substantially;
- Establishment of committees to update/revise position statements on ballot initiatives and intensive management;
- Expansion and updating of the Chapter website as well as online voting and conference registration capabilities;

Specifically, Howard:

- Doggedly recruited folks to run for election to the Executive Board;
- Published the Chapter's commentary piece on reliable knowledge and wildlife science in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner;
- Led the way in the Chapter's pursuit to improve TWS policy regarding the availability and use of member contact information. This effort, with the support of the NW Section in the form of a joint letter to Council, resulted in significant changes to TWS policy and protocol; and
- While President-elect, he was a key figure, along with Gino DeIfrate, in organizing the national TWS meeting held in Anchorage in 2006.

And those are just the highlights. Please join me in thanking Howard for his dedicated service on our behalf.

Chapter Goals:

I never thought I would be in a position to say this, but "stay the course" is a good summation of my goals for the Chapter. Howard has handed over a well-run organization that is on top of issues related to wildlife in Alaska and that has a good membership base. Certainly, there is no need for radical change. When Howard began his term as President, he outlined his goals as follows: make the chapter relevant to all members, encourage participation at any level, and address important wildlife issues. I intend to continue



to work toward those goals, particularly the second one. I want to emphasize student participation in our Chapter as a primary goal of my presidency. UAF is seeing a resurgence of the Student Chapter of TWS, and I would like to see that continue and include students from UAA, UAS, and APU as well.

Chapter Activities:

As for the goal of addressing important wildlife issues, I would like to review our activities since the annual meeting. We just saw the end of the legislative session in Juneau and the Chapter was actively involved in tracking and responding to legislation. Thanks to Dave Yokel for being our point man on all things legislative. We provided comments to legislators on two pieces of legislation. The first was a bill that would have opened the Dalton Highway corridor to snow-machine traffic. We provided detailed comments on the impact that increased snow-machine traffic likely would have on wildlife and wildlife management. That bill was a reincarnation of a bill proposed in the 2006 Legislature that we commented on at the time. The bill died in committee this time around. The second piece of legislation that we commented on was the operating budget. We supported the inclusion of funding to build a new life sciences building at UAF that would greatly benefit the biology and wildlife program. Unfortunately, the funding was removed from the budget and will be part of a major bond package that will go before the voters in the fall. I encourage you to support that package in order to replace old and sub-standard facilities at UAF. Also, we provided comments to the US Fish and Wildlife Service concerning their upcoming review of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Finally, we reviewed a draft letter from the national office to the US Fish and Wildlife Service concerning the land swap and road proposed for Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. Each of the letters is available on the Chapter website: http://joomla.wildlife.org/alaska/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=156&Itemid=228.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for allowing me to serve as your President for the next two years. It is a responsibility I don't take lightly. The other Executive Board members and I don't want to do this alone, however. We encourage you to actively participate in Chapter activities as we strive to achieve our mission, which is to enhance the ability of wildlife professionals to conserve biological diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources in Alaska for the benefit of society. I would love to hear from you if you have comments, concerns, or would like to get involved. My door is always open.

News from Southcentral:

By Chris Kaplan Southcentral Representative

People: Southcentral Region (RII) of ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation is being divided into two separate regions. The new Region (Region IV) comprises Palmer, Glennallen, King Salmon, and Dillingham. The modified Region II consists of the Anchorage, Kenai, Cordova, and Kodiak. To fill the resultant positions, Bruce Dale was temporarily upgraded to Region IV's Regional Supervisor and Tony Kavalok was temporarily upgraded to Region IV's Management Coordinator. These and other Region IV positions will be advertised on Workplace Alaska later this summer or fall.

Sheyna Wisdom, a marine mammal acoustical expert, was recently hired by LGL Alaska Research, Inc.

News: The Cook Inlet beluga whale was listed as Endangered in October 2008. After listing a species as Endangered, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is required by law under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to develop a Recovery Plan. As outlined in the "terms of reference" on the NMFS website, "recovery" is defined "as the process by which listed species and their ecosystems are restored and their future is safeguarded to the point that the protections of the ESA are no longer required." While not a requirement, NMFS chose to assemble a Recovery Team to act as an advisory group and guide NMFS management in the drafting of the plan. The Recovery Team met for the first time March 30th through April 1st, 2010. Two voluntary advisory groups make up the team. One group is scientific, composed of 12 beluga experts, scientists and co-partners from state and federal agencies, plus non-governmental and Alaska Native organizations. The other group consists of 18 members representing a variety of agency, industry, environmental, military and Alaska Native stakeholders with either identified interests in the recovery, or groups who may be affected by the actions implemented to recover the whales. Team member information, meeting notes and further details can be found at:

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/whales/beluga/recovery/ci.htm>.



News from the North:

By Stephen Arthur, Northern Representative

People: Tim Craig has been selected as lead wildlife biologist at Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge. Tim has worked for the past 10 years as a wildlife biologist with the Bureau of Land Management, Central Yukon Field Office in Fairbanks. Tim will report for duty June 6.

News: In April, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that it will begin an effort to update the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Public comments are being accepted through June 7, 2010. More details can be found at: <http://arctic.fws.gov/ccp.htm>.

The Alaska Board of Game met in Fairbanks during 2/26 - 3/7/2010. A variety of changes to hunting and trapping regulations were implemented. Details are available at the board's web site:

<http://www.boards.adfg.state.ak.us/gameinfo/index.php>

News from Southeast:

By Deborah Rudis, Southeast Representative

People: Doug Larsen is the new (and former) ADF&G DWC Southeast Regional Supervisor. Rod Flynn is now DWC's SE Region's Research Coordinator.

Dr. Wini Kessler is retiring from her USFS position at the end of May and is immediately moving back to BC. She can be reached at [winikessler@gmail.com](mailto:wini@winikessler@gmail.com) or 250-967-4574. Wini hopes to stay active in TWS and is on the ballot for Vice President. Also, she is involved in getting a new BC Chapter up and running. Wini will serve as the Chair of the Board for the BC Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and continue teaching as a Certified Fitness Instructor.

Scott Frickey has joined USFWS's Ecological Services office as a wildlife biologist working on eagle permits in Southeast Alaska. He moved here from MT where he worked for BLM, and he has previously worked for other agencies in Cold Bay and Anchorage.

Steve Lewis moved from ADF&G in Douglas to work in raptor management with USFWS's Migratory Bird Program. He will be working on birds of prey throughout Alaska.

News: Deer population assessment using DNA: ADF&G's Division of Wildlife Conservation is working

cooperatively with the USFS and the University of Alaska on development and testing of a new technique for estimating deer population numbers in SE Alaska. The work involves DNA sampling from deer fecal pellets. The work is being conducted this spring on NE Chichagof Island.

Announcements

The International Polar Year Oslo Science Conference, **8-12 June 2010** in Oslo, Norway, includes a session on Polar Ecosystems and Biodiversity. <http://www.apecs.is/events/oslo2010>.

TWS draft position statement on the use of science in policy and management decisions: COMMENTS DUE to laura@wildlife.org by **15 June, 2010**. http://joomla.wildlife.org/documents/positionstatements/Abuse_of_science_draft.pdf.

24th International Congress for Conservation Biology: Conservation for a Changing Planet, Edmonton, Alberta, **3-7 July 2010**. <http://www.conbio.org>.

The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies meeting, **July 16-21, 2010** in Anchorage, Alaska. <http://www.wafwa.org/>.

Pathways to Success 2010 Conference: Increasing human capacity for global human-wildlife coexistence **27 September-1 October, 2010** in Estes Park, Colorado. <http://warnercnr.colostate.edu/nrrt/hdfw/>.

The Wildlife Society's 17th Annual Conference, to be held **October 2-6, 2010** in Snowbird, Utah. <http://www.wildlifesociety.org/>.

The Wildlife Professional: Looking for contributions for its Field Notes section. Please send to: editor@wildlife.org. http://joomla.wildlife.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=47.



2011 Annual Meeting

Planning for the 2011 annual meeting to be held in Juneau will begin later this summer. The Chapter is now soliciting ideas for workshops or special sessions to be held during the meeting. We also need a program chair and people to serve on the organizing committee, especially those that can help with local arrangements in Juneau. Involvement on the organizing committee provides a great opportunity to interact with colleagues while serving the Chapter. If you have program ideas or want to help with meeting arrangements, please contact Jerry Hupp (jhupp@usgs.gov).

You can contribute!

Please make note of upcoming events, projects, personnel changes, issues, 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.

And don't forget, our Newsletter and Chapter Website now have an [opinion page](#) specifically dedicated for the discussion of topics pertinent to AK-TWS.

Change for an Alaska Conservation Leader

By Chris Kaplan, Southcentral Representative

After 10 successful years, John Schoen is vacating his position as Audubon Alaska's Senior Scientist to assume a more advisory role with the organization. John has been an outspoken leader in the conservation of Alaska's wildlife and habitat statewide, spending the 20 years prior to his work with Audubon at ADF&G as a research and senior conservation biologist. He served as president of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society in the early 1980s. John has received numerous recognitions and awards for his work, including the Olaus Marie Award, Fellow to the Wildlife Society, and the Wilberforce Foundation's Conservation Leadership Award. Thankfully, John plans to continue to be a champion for wildlife conservation while pursuing his interest in photography.

Controversial Shift in Leadership for ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation

By Chris Kaplan, Southcentral Representative

Recent restructuring of the Division of Wildlife Conservation by ADF&G Commissioner Denby Lloyd resulted in a sudden and controversial change in the agency's leadership. Doug Larsen, who had been DWC Director for 2½ years, was asked to step down and has returned to his former position as Southeast Regional Supervisor. Larsen was replaced by Corey Rossi, who began working with ADF&G in December 2008 when he was appointed as Assistant Commissioner for Abundance Management. He previously had worked as District Supervisor with USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in Alaska. The appointment of Rossi as DWC Director inspired an unprecedented response by 53 former ADF&G employees (17 current TWS members), representing some 1007 years of combined experience as management and research biologists and supervisors. These former employees strongly urged Commissioner Lloyd to rescind Rossi's appointment. The group expressed deep concern that Rossi lacked the education, training, and background experience necessary to lead the professionals at the respected science-based agency. The letters also listed concerns that the Division would be focused on the production of game animals at the expense of balanced conservation management that includes habitat protection, biodiversity conservation, endangered species management, and watchable wildlife. These concerns were fueled, in part, by an editorial piece by Rossi published on 21 February in the Anchorage Daily News, outlining the application of abundance-based fish and game management. Lloyd responded to the former ADF&G employees by reiterating his continued support for Rossi, gained after recently working with him, and rejected their request to find a more suitable leader. Rossi will serve as Director from the Anchorage Regional Office.

TWS membership is now required for AWB® and CWB®, certifications to remain valid, so be sure to join or renew at wildlife.org

New memberships and renewals are available on-line at The Wildlife Society's store (<https://store.wildlife.org/>).



Ocellated Emerald dragonfly (*Somatochlora minor*) new to Alaska

By John Hudson, USFWS

Alaska's dragonfly list grew by one last year with the discovery of a single female Ocellated Emerald in the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge. The specimen was netted at a Sphagnum bog in the heart of the refuge during a 3-day collecting trip targeting the genus. Since efforts to document the Refuge's odonate fauna began in 2004, 25 species have been documented at Kanuti making it one of the top areas for dragonfly diversity in the state. Remarkably, the following month a population of Ocellated Emeralds was discovered at Juneau's Auke Lake, an area that has been surveyed intensively since 1997.

Emeralds (Corduliidae) comprise the most species-rich family of dragonflies in Alaska. The common name refers to the brilliant emerald-green eyes and metallic green thorax. Nine species are currently known from the state. They are locally rare, secretive, and difficult to capture. The two species of dragonflies that likely occur here, but have yet to be collected are emeralds: Brush-tipped Emerald (*S. walshii*) and Muskeg Emerald (*S. septentrionalis*).

The Kanuti survey was funded by a Challenge Cost Share grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This year the same grant will fund dragonfly surveys in Kanuti and the Selawick National Wildlife Refuges. To date 35 dragonfly species have been found in Alaska.

Alaska Chapter Leadership

Your 2010-2012 Executive Board

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