

# NORTHWEST WILDLIFER

ALASKA  
ALBERTA  
BRITISH COLUMBIA  
IDAHO  
MONTANA  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
NUNAVUT  
OREGON  
WASHINGTON  
YUKON TERRITORY

July 2007 \_\_\_\_\_ NORTHWEST SECTION

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## NORTHWEST SECTION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Progress on establishing the new Canadian Section of TWS has been excellent. The bylaws for the new section were reviewed by Canadian TWS members and overwhelmingly approved by vote on 30 April 2007. TWS Council subsequently approved formation of the Canadian Section on 3 May. The next step was to identify candidates for all officer positions and to hold an election. That process is underway now, with 2 candidates running for each of the following positions: Canadian Section Representative on TWS Council; President; President-Elect; Vice President; and Past President. You can view the qualifications, statements, and photos of the candidates on the new webpages that were added for the Canadian Section (once on [www.wildlife.org](http://www.wildlife.org), click on Sections and then on Canada). The voting will end on 17 August and counting will be done the following week.

If all goes according to plan, a fully operational Canadian Section will be on hand for the TWS Annual Meeting in Tucson, scheduled for 22–26 September. In the meantime, TWS is adjusting the boundaries of existing sections (such as the Northwest Section) to remove Canadian provinces and territories that now comprise the Canadian Section.

The high energy and enthusiasm for the new section indicate that it was a move long overdue. As a dual citizen of Canada and the U.S., I'm personally thrilled to see this elevation of Canadian membership to full Section status.

**Wini Kessler**, Northwest  
Section Representative



## ALASKA CHAPTER NEWS

### Presidents Message—Tom Paragi

It was a great pleasure to attend the annual Chapter meeting and jointly held Northern Furbearer Conference in Juneau during 16-20 April. We were treated to sunshine, mild temperatures, and nearly calm conditions after the Southeast's "summer that didn't happen" last year that was followed by a winter of record snowfall. Highlights and meeting statistics are provided in the chapter newsletter, but I wanted to again highlight the tremendous efforts by the program chairs, Kevin White and Dale Rabe, along with a cast of outstanding volunteers: Neil Barten, Karen Blejwas, Rod Flynn, Howard Golden, Matt Kirchhoff, Michelle Kissling, Doug Larsen, Steve Lewis, Karin McCoy, Sanjay Pyare, Kristin Romanoff, Helen Slama, Winston Smith, Dave Tallmon, and Jamie Womble—thank you!

We held the business meeting on 19 April with about 25 members in attendance, including five Executive Board members. (It was hard to compete with sunshine in Juneau, even with a free lunch and door prizes!). Minutes of the meeting will be posted on our website soon ([www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak](http://www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak)). Here are a few highlights:

- The Chapter has a healthy budget because of revenues from the TWS conference in Anchorage last September
- TWS is moving steadily toward transferring website posting privileges to Chapters for more timely updates, and Liz Solomon has volunteered to serve as our Chapter webmaster
- A member request for a "lifetime member" category was determined to be unfeasible because Chapter bylaws were revised last year to require membership in TWS, which no longer has a lifetime member category

*Comments on Tongass Land Management Plan.* In late April, John Schoen and Matt Kirchhoff collaborated to draft a comment letter to the U.S. Forest Service on the Draft EIS for adjustment of the Tongass Land Management Plan. The Executive Board provided comments on the draft, and past-President Eric Taylor worked with Laura Bies (TWS Associate Director for Government Affairs) to route the letter among TWS Council and present the final version for signature by Michael Hutchins (TWS Executive Director) on 30 April. The letter explained why the proposed adjustment of timber harvest objectives on the Tongass National Forest did not adequately address concerns for wildlife conservation. The letter's 12 recommendations drew upon the recently approved TWS position statement on old growth that was drafted last year by the Alaska Chapter.

*Predator Control Technical Review.* The technical review proposal "Predator Control in Alaska: History, Effectiveness, Current Status, and Future Prospects" was submitted to the Executive Committee of the Alaska Chapter in March by Alaska Chapter past-President Eric Taylor and TWS Vice President Tom Franklin. The Alaska Chapter Executive Board unanimously approved the draft proposal (one Executive Board member did not vote) and provided comments. The revised draft was approved in March by Wini Kessler, TWS Northwest Section Representative. The final proposal was presented to TWS Council on 23 March 2007 and was unanimously approved. In April, TWS President John Organ appointed a Council Subcommittee to serve as the point-of-contact for a Technical Review Committee. President Organ is currently selecting a committee of 10-12 members and sent a letter to ADFG Commissioner Denby Lloyd, inviting the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to nominate one or more staff specialists to serve on the

committee. The expected technical review completion date is December 2008.

#### *Gap Analysis Program coming to Alaska*

Most of you are familiar with the conservation practice of identifying areas of high biological diversity and overlaying boundaries of protected areas to highlight where there may be “gaps” as a means to prioritize new conservation units. The Gap Analysis Program (GAP, “Keeping Common Species Common”) is completed or well underway in most of the other 49 states and is beginning to move forward in Alaska, although work on data layers has been underway by various groups for awhile. The major impediment in Alaska has been lack of a statewide vegetation layer at an appropriate resolution. The LANDFIRE project is expected to produce a statewide Landsat landcover classification (30 m resolution) for Alaska by 2009 as part of a system to map hazardous fuels and fire risk in the United States. The Alaska Natural Heritage Program (ANHP) is leading GAP and held meetings around the state this past February to inform stakeholders about progress on GAP in Alaska and get comments on how to proceed with expert review of vertebrate species distributions over the next couple years.

#### **Wildlife Disease Monitoring** by Kimberlee Beckmen

*Arctic and Red Fox Rabies Outbreak.* The North Slope and Southwest Alaska are experiencing a widespread and continuing rabies outbreak in arctic and red foxes. Between December 4th, 2006 and April 13th, 2007, 10 arctic and 11 red foxes on the North Slope and 4 red foxes from Southwest Alaska tested positive for rabies. Most of the cases, especially those involving exposures of people or dogs to

bites, were from around Barrow or the Prudhoe Bay oil field. Only 5 foxes submitted because of abnormal behavior or being found dead were rabies-negative and two of those died from canine distemper virus. These viral diseases tend to occur in epizootics when fox populations are high (as they are now) and likely will have a significant population regulating effect.

#### **Alaska Legislature and Board Actions** by Tom Paragi

There was relatively little wildlife-related legislation this session compared with recent years. Thanks to Dave Yokel for keeping the Chapter updated during the session. A full recount may be found in the Chapter newsletter at <http://www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak>.

One issue was related to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposal to list polar bears as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act (Federal Register Jan. 9, 2007). In late March the Legislature worked quickly to pass two similar resolutions (House Resolution 6 and Senate Resolution 6) in opposition to proposed listing of polar bears as a threatened species. The Senate resolution characterized the proposed listing as a “*political and legal tool by environmental extremists to block exploration and development of strategic resources vital to the state and the nation as a whole.*” The Senate resolution listed polar bear populations as having “*approximately tripled in the last three decades*” and noted that the listing agency “*fail[ed] to recognize the uncertainty of summer Arctic ice modeling.*” Both resolutions were presented to Governor Palin, President Bush, the Alaska Delegation, governors and presiding legislative officials of the other 49 states, and the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



## WASHINGTON CHAPTER UPDATE

We had a very successful annual meeting in Pendleton, Oregon in conjunction with the Oregon Chapter last April. Planning is currently underway for our 2008 annual meeting to be held jointly with the Northwest Section. Updates will be available on the Washington Chapter website ([http://www.washingtonwildlifesoc.org/ns/default\\_ns.htm](http://www.washingtonwildlifesoc.org/ns/default_ns.htm)) as the program details are finalized. We're currently putting together a Steering Committee and will be soliciting ideas and leaders for workshops, symposia, field trips and special sessions. We'll also need session moderators, contest organizers, etc., so if you'd like to volunteer to help with any activity associated with the annual meeting contact me ([jmac@longfibre.com](mailto:jmac@longfibre.com)) or A. J. Kroll ([AJ.Kroll@weyerhaeuser.com](mailto:AJ.Kroll@weyerhaeuser.com), President-elect) as soon as possible.

The Chapter will also be holding a contest to develop a new logo. The current logo features the Egyptian hieroglyphics panel of the parent society. A design with a local or regional theme would be preferred. The contest will be open to all, and members of

the Student Chapters are particularly encouraged to submit designs. A rough sketch will be sufficient, as the Board will select the top 2-3 entries and have a graphics artist finalize those designs, prior to a vote by the Chapter members. Contest details such as the deadline and prize have yet to be determined, but we'd like to announce the winner at the annual meeting (early Spring 2008). Prize suggestions to date include a year's membership in the chapter and parent society (with all publications) or a gift certificate of equal value to Cabela's, REI, etc. It's not too early to begin designing your entry, which can be submitted to any chapter Board member. Associated with the logo contest, is the need to develop an information/member recruitment pamphlet/brochure describing the Washington Chapter, officers, activities, and contacts. We will be working on developing the brochure over the next few months and all ideas and volunteers are welcome.

**Jim MacCracken**, President

## NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM FACES BUDGET CRISIS

Faced with years of funding shortfalls and a \$2.5 billion backlog in operations and maintenance projects, the National Wildlife Refuge System will be forced to cut 20 percent of its staff by 2010 unless Congress increases its funding, according to a report released on 25 April 2007 by the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE). CARE is a coalition of 21 wildlife, sporting, conservation, and scientific organizations, including The Wildlife Society.

The report, "Restoring America's Wildlife Legacy 2007," compiles information from workforce restructuring plans that each U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) region

developed in response to the persistent funding shortfalls. FWS cut 227 staff positions between 2004 and 2006, with plans to eliminate another 338 positions by 2010. In addition, FWS has identified 1,225 high-priority staff positions that remain unfilled.

FWS has also identified \$1.23 billion in backlogged projects, including 919 "mission critical" projects. Deferred maintenance projects now total \$1.53 billion. These shortfalls have forced refuges to shorten or eliminate visitor center hours, close roads, terminate educational programs, and reduce biological monitoring.

Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), co-chair of the newly formed 135-member Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus, intends to use the CARE report to generate support in Congress for increased funding for the refuge system. On 23 May 2007, the House Interior Appropriations Committee approved \$451

million for the refuge system for FY08, which represents a \$56 million increase over last year and matches CARE's specific FY08 request.

Excerpted from Wildlife Policy News.

## **WIND ENERGY COSTLY FOR BIRDS AND BATS**

Environmental benefits of using renewable wind energy could be hindered by negative impacts to bats and birds. Currently, laws and regulations governing wildlife protection do not require wind energy facilities to address wildlife protection when constructing on private land. Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Nick Rahall's new energy bill (H.R. 2337) includes provisions that would direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop mandatory requirements to ensure "wildlife safe" wind energy

A 2005 report from the Worldwatch Institute determined that between 30,000 and 60,000 birds are killed annually by wind energy, and estimates that number will increase to 1.8 million birds annually by 2030 unless protective measures are taken. Between 1,400 and 4,000 bats were killed at Mountaineer Wind Energy Center in West Virginia in 2003. Bat fatality estimates for the mid-Atlantic highlands alone are projected to be between 32,818 to 64,281 annually by 2020.

Wind turbines cause both direct and indirect mortality of birds and bats, particularly when they are located in migration paths and

heavily used areas. According to testimony at the House Committee on Natural Resources hearing "Gone with the Wind: Impacts of Wind Turbines on Birds and Bats," bird and bat deaths could be prevented if wind turbines were better located, ran on variable schedules aligned with wildlife activities (e.g., curtailment of operations during low wind periods, when bats are usually killed), and had mandatory guidelines for best management practices. Recent research by Bat Conservation International suggests that bats may actually be attracted to wind turbines, emphasizing the importance of current research efforts for deterrent devices.

The American Bird Conservancy and Bat Conservation International recommend Congress link mandatory reviews to wind power tax incentives, noting that citizen suits should be allowed for better compliance measures. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Chief Dale Hall agrees that guidelines should be mandatory, saying that federal prosecution for those facilities that do not comply could have merit.

Excerpted from Wildlife Policy News

## **POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES SCIENCE**

Department of Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, Julie MacDonald, resigned on 30 April 2007, a month after an internal investigation revealed her guilty of engaging in

interference in science, disclosure of non-public information to private sources, and preferential treatment. Since then, two members of the House Committee on Natural Resources have asked Interior

Secretary Dirk Kempthorne for a complete investigation into MacDonald's actions while in office.

The Interior Office of the Inspector General (IG) report found that MacDonald, who has no background in the natural sciences, was "heavily involved with editing, commenting on, and reshaping the Endangered Species Program's scientific reports from the field." It documented examples that include MacDonald ignoring scientific data gathered by field biologists that indicated southwest willow flycatchers have a flying radius around their nests of 2.1 miles. MacDonald forced the biologists to change the radius to 1.8 miles in the final document.

In violation of ethics and non-disclosure rules, MacDonald emailed internal draft regulations on critical habitat designation to the Pacific Legal Foundation, a private law firm in California; used subordinates to gather information on the threatened Delta smelt requested by a California Farm Bureau lobbyist and then gave that information to the lobbyist; and emailed internal U.S. Environmental Protection Agency documents to chevrontexaco.com email accounts.

Excerpted from Wildlife Policy News

## FOREST PLANNING RULE VIOLATES ESA, NEPA

The U.S. Forest Service has been prohibited from using its 2005 forest planning rule because it violated the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), according to a 30 March 2007 ruling by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. Until the Forest Service has "fully complied" with those laws, it is enjoined from using the 2005 planning rule, which governs the development of management plans for the nation's 155 national forests and 20 national grasslands, covering activities such as recreation, logging, and protecting endangered species.

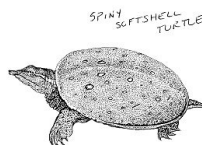
According to the court, the Forest Service violated the ESA when it failed to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service on the rule's impacts on wildlife in national forests. The rule also removed a requirement to ensure viable populations of at-risk species in national forests, and elevated social and economic

considerations to the same level as ecological sustainability.

The Forest Service violated NEPA when it improperly used a categorical exclusion for the forest plans (see WPN Vol. 17, Issue 1, Article 2), thus failing to adequately consider the environmental impacts of the rule. The Forest Service also illegally added Environmental Management System protocols into the final 2005 rule without public review or comment, violating the APA.

The Bush Administration appealed the ruling. The Administration also argues the ruling should apply only to the Northern District of California, rather than the entire nation. Previous nationwide injunctions against Forest Service policies have been upheld, including one regarding the use of categorical exclusions for timber harvests and others regarding several versions of the Roadless Rule.

Excerpted from Wildlife Policy News



R. Savannah USFWS



## THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Tucson, Arizona ★ September 22-26, 2007

Hosted by the Arizona Chapter

For all the details check out the TWS website at:  
<http://www.wildlife.org/conference/tucson07/index.cfm>

### CHAPTER NEWS

**Check Out these Websites for more details on Chapter Activities!**

Alaska: <http://www.wildlife.org/chapters/ak/index.cfm>

Alberta: <http://albertadirectory.net/actws/>

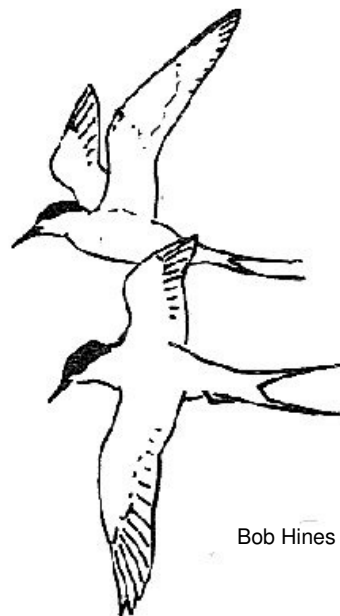
Idaho: <http://www.ictws.org/>

Montana: <http://www.montanatws.org/>

Oregon: <http://fw.oregonstate.edu/tws/>

Washington: <http://www.washingtonwildlifesoc.org>

(British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Yukon Territory: no Chapters)



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