



# Urban Wildlife News

The Newsletter of the Urban Wildlife Working Group  
of The Wildlife Society

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## A Word from the Chair

*Kate Stenberg*

Washington State recently surveyed other state fish and wildlife agencies to determine their successes and challenges related to public wildlife viewing. Of the 33 states responding, the majority said their agencies have not addressed the major challenges and some even predicted a major “train wreck” in their near future if they did not begin to address society’s changing values and interests regarding wildlife.

Where’s that “train wreck” coming from? The light coming through the tunnel – the headlights of the oncoming locomotive – is the urban environment. This year (2004) marks the first year that the majority of the world’s population will live in urban areas. The Society for Conservation Biology is recognizing that fact with this year’s conference theme “Conservation in an Urbanizing World.”

“Urban matters do matter” as Peter Massini, English Nature’s Acting Regional Policy Officer states. We cannot, as some have advocated, write off urban areas as a lost cause. Urban effects extend well beyond the city limits. Air and water pollution affect wildlife in the most remote corners of the world. Urban areas block wildlife movements from one place to another. The extraction and production of resources and food to support urban areas also affect distant locales. Equally important, urban areas are where the majority of the world’s popu-

lation experiences the environment. What sort of environment are they learning about? Consider that these are the people who will be directing society’s priorities in funding and legislative policy.

Currently, the Urban Wildlife Working Group has 132 members, which makes us the second largest working group of The Wildlife Society. But I know that there are more of “us” out there. National workshops on urban wildlife have traditionally attracted audiences of over 300. Recent conferences sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation have attracted urban wildlife professionals who are generally not members of The Wildlife Society. We need to find ways to make the working group useful to these people.

In order to be successful in the urban arena, we need to partner with a wide variety of professions. We need to find allies in the fields of planning, urban design, and landscape architecture, and to network with transportation engineers, economists and politicians. We need to find all of the wildlife biologists out there working in the urban trenches who do not belong to the working group or even The Wildlife Society and include them in our network. By supporting each other, sharing information and resources, we may be able to begin to reshape urban areas to deliver greater ecological functions and counter the negative aspects of urbanization.

I have read Tolkien's epic, the *Lord of the Rings*, many times since I discovered it in the '60s. Watching a recent screening of the final film, I was struck anew that what makes this such a powerful story is that at every turn, the characters choose the path of hope, the path of action. If we work together, we can make a difference. Send me the names of every biologist you know working with urban issues. Let's build our network!

### **Election Results**

Chair John Hadidian announced election results at the working group's annual meeting in Burlington. Our new chair is Kate Stenberg, the chair-elect is Seth Riley, the secretary-treasurer is Kelly Bender, and our board members are Jeff Azerrad, Clint Boal, Laurie Brown, Lisa Harris, Craig Johnson, and John Triana. Chair Hadidian welcomed the new officers and board members and expressed his appreciation to all who participated in the election for their contributions to the working group. He also thanked Charlie Nilon (chair), Allan O'Connell, and Dave Trauger of the nominating and elections committee for their work conducting the election.

### **UWWG Activities in Burlington**

The working group was active at The Wildlife Society's 2003 annual meeting in Burlington, Vermont, sponsoring or cosponsoring three events. On Saturday, September 6, a workshop entitled "Open Space Design in Burlington and South Burlington, Vermont" was held. The cities of Burlington and South Burlington presented their open space plans and students and faculty of the University of Vermont presented evaluations of the plans from a wildlife perspective. The final segment of this workshop was a roundtable discussion by all partici-

pants on the challenges, opportunities, and value of considering wildlife in open space design plans. It was a good opportunity for professional planners and biologists to interact and discuss practical issues in a real-world setting.

A half-day session entitled "Suburban Wildlife: Lessons, Challenges, and Opportunities" was held Monday morning, September 8. A brief history of wildlife conservation in urban and suburban areas was presented, along with papers on conflict resolution, community-based management, and the Sonoran Desert conservation plan in the Tucson, Arizona, metropolitan area. An afternoon session on Monday "Wildlife Disease in the Urban/Suburban Environment" explored the extent to which zoonotic diseases affect urban and suburban habitats. The session also addressed public education tools and management strategies that should be considered to protect the well being of both wildlife and humans. The journal *Urban Ecosystems* has expressed interest in publishing selected papers from the Monday sessions in an upcoming special issue of the journal.

### **The Wildlife Society's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

Mark your calendars, **the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society will be held in Calgary, Alberta, Canada from September 18-22, 2004.** More than 30 symposia, workshops, contributed papers, and poster sessions are planned, including "Habitat Conservation in the Upper Bow Corridor, Alberta" to be cosponsored by the working group (see below for more details). Information on the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference is available at [www.wildlife.org](http://www.wildlife.org).

The working group will hold its annual meeting during the Calgary conference. For many of us, this is our only opportunity to

meet one another face to face. The officers and board encourage you to attend if at all possible. Check our next newsletter for more details on the date and time of the meeting.

### **UWWG Sponsored Workshop Accepted for Calgary Meeting**

David Drake of Rutgers University and Harry Zinn of Penn State University will offer a workshop titled "Habitat Conservation in the Upper Bow Corridor, Alberta," at The Wildlife Society's Annual Conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The working group is cosponsoring the event.

The workshop will be divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The morning session will review past and current open space planning efforts. Representatives from the towns of Banff and Canmore, Banff National Park, and select surrounding communities will present their open space design plans. The working group and wildlife students and faculty from the University of Calgary will provide input regarding wildlife considerations in the plans. The morning session will end with a panel discussion providing excellent opportunity for planners, landscape architects, and biologists to exchange views and ideas about how to better meet urban open space needs for people and wildlife.

The afternoon session will consist of a field trip to open space sites discussed in the morning session. The field trip will allow for additional interaction among workshop participants, open space planners, University faculty, students, and community residents. Look for more information in the preliminary program announcement from The Wildlife Society later this year or contact David Drake [drake@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:drake@aesop.rutgers.edu) or Harry Zinn [hzinn@psu.edu](mailto:hzinn@psu.edu).

### **3<sup>rd</sup> International Wildlife Management Congress**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Wildlife Management Congress, held in Christchurch, New Zealand, December 1-5, 2003, was attended by more than 900 delegates. TWS was a major organizer of this Congress as it was for the previous two.

The working group sponsored a symposium entitled "Wildlife Management in Urban Areas," organized by Darryl Jones of Griffith University, Queensland, and Bill Shaw of the University of Arizona. Topics addressed covered a broad range of subjects dealing with contemporary issues in urban wildlife management, urban biodiversity, U.S. trends, ecological traps, wildlife hotline assistance, koalas, foxes, kangaroos, and supplemental feeding of birds.

The Congress provided an excellent forum in which to hear about and share experiences with urban wildlife on a global scale. It was also complemented by a well-organized field trip that focused on Christchurch and its own urban issues and restoration activities.

--Summary contributed by John Hadidian

### **Urban Herpetology**

*Herpetological Conservation* is a new series from the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles. Drs. Robin Jung and Joseph Mitchell are editing a volume for the series entitled *Urban Herpetology: Ecology, Conservation and Management of Amphibians and Reptiles in Urban and Suburban Environments*. The intent of this volume is to present reviews and summaries of original research that provide new directions for future conservation efforts, management, and research in urban herpetology. It will also serve as a showcase of how well or poorly amphibians and reptiles are

doing in urban ecosystems on a worldwide scale.

The editors are looking for contributions to the volume. If you work with urban amphibians or reptiles and are potentially interested in contributing to the volume's production, or you know of others who might be interested, please contact Robin at 301-497-5875 or [robin\\_jung@usgs.gov](mailto:robin_jung@usgs.gov).

### UWWG Web Site

Most of you, by request, are receiving this newsletter electronically from the working group web site. We hope to continue making better use of the site. If you have suggestions for how to improve it, please send them to Mark Wallace at Texas Tech University ([mark.wallace@ttu.edu](mailto:mark.wallace@ttu.edu)) or post your suggestions in the "Discussion Area" of the web site (or do both).

The web site offers great potential as a networking link if we use it regularly. If you haven't done so already, please bookmark the site, contribute to it, and make regular

visits to the site for updated information. You can access the site directly at <http://www.rw.ttu.edu/urbwlf> or by going to The Wildlife Society home page (<http://www.wildlife.org>) and clicking on "About TWS" and then on "Working Groups."

### Upcoming and of Interest

 The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology, July 30 – August 2, 2004, will focus on "**Conservation in an Urbanizing World.**" Plenary sessions, symposia, workshops, organized discussions, contributed oral presentations, and poster sessions are planned. Field trips to key restoration and conservation sites in and near New York City have been organized to highlight the possibilities that exist. The meeting will be hosted by the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation at the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York City. See the Society's web site (<http://ConservationBiology.org>) for more details.

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