



# Urban Wildlife News

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

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Editors: Lowell Adams and Jennifer Cotting

## A Word from the Chair

*David Drake*

Happy 2008! It is my pleasure to serve as chair of the Urban Wildlife Working Group for the next 2 years. There have been a number of notable figures who've been active for years in the field of urban wildlife management who served as chair of this working group. I'm honored to follow in their footsteps. I want to extend a sincere thank you to our most recent chair, Seth Riley. Seth was a tireless worker and advocate on behalf of the working group and provided great direction. Under Seth's leadership, the working group has taken on a number of new initiatives, including submitting to the journal *Landscape and Urban Planning* a critical review of conservation subdivisions relative to wildlife management, and the initial planning stages for a national conference on urban wildlife in 2009. For more details, please see the discussion elsewhere in this issue and in past issues of *Urban Wildlife News*. To my great relief as incoming chair, Seth has agreed to remain as active in the working group as past-chair as he was during his tenure as chair. Thank you Seth!

For those of you who may not be familiar with me, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I'm currently an Extension Wildlife Specialist/Assistant Professor in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Like nearly everywhere else in the United States, Wisconsin (especially the southern

half) is struggling with urbanization, and I spend much of my time helping suburban landowners maximize habitats on their lots to benefit wildlife so most of the human-wildlife interactions can be positive experiences. Prior to this job, I was on the faculty at Rutgers University in New Jersey. As the most urbanized state in the country, it was an eye opener, to say the least, to work as a wildlife biologist in New Jersey. It was, however, a great experience and changed forever the way I view wildlife.

My goals as chair of the working group are to continue to recruit members so our working group keeps growing and to maintain momentum. Based on the demographics and urbanization of America, as well as other parts of the world, there are few environments and wildlife populations not affected directly or indirectly by urbanization. If urban wildlife is defined liberally, our working group has something to offer nearly every member of The Wildlife Society. I also want to maintain the momentum and initiatives Seth, and other chairs before him, have begun. Our working group is as active now as anytime since I've been a member. I'd like to continue that momentum and see the newly started initiatives through to completion so I can hand other exciting areas of activity off to the next chair. In the meantime, keep doing good things for wildlife and please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions, concerns, suggestions, or want to become more active within our working group. Thank you.

--David

## Annual Meeting in Tucson

The working group held its annual meeting on 24 September 2007, in Tucson, Arizona, in conjunction with the annual conference of The Wildlife Society (TWS). Twenty-eight individuals attended, 13 of whom were members, constituting a quorum.

Chair Riley presented the written Secretary-Treasurer's report submitted by Harry Zinn, who was not present. As of 15 September 2007, the working group checking account balance was \$4,470.21. The report was accepted.

Two special committee reports were presented. David Drake reported on the Wildlife Friendly Urban Development Committee. The committee is chaired by Mark Hostetler, with David Drake, John Hadidian, Lesley Kordella, and Seth Riley also serving. David stated that the committee has focused on two issues. One deals with training materials (manual) for green development. Some discussion has occurred regarding adapting the Florida Model (Hostetler) to other regions of the United States. Chris Moorman reported that he had similar materials for North Carolina. The second item the committee has focused on is a critique of conservation subdivisions. Current guidelines for creating such developments lack good information on wildlife. Plans are to publish the critique in *Landscape and Urban Planning* or another appropriate journal.

The second special committee report, on Urban Wildlife Conferences, was presented by committee chair Steve DeStefano. Also serving on that committee are Lowell Adams, David Drake, and Seth Riley. Steve stated that there was interest in hosting the Fifth International Symposium on Urban Wildlife Conservation somewhere in New

England in Spring 2009. Rob Deblinger of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has agreed to serve as co-chair with Steve. Discussion of pros and cons of several states and locations within states ensued. The committee will continue research in an effort to find a location with easy access and reasonable costs. Opportunity for field trips also is a consideration. The effort will require a strong program committee and on-site planning committee. We should consider various sponsors (state agencies, NGOs, and the development community, among others) to help cover costs and keep registration fees as low as possible. There is belief in the working group that high costs are keeping many students and non-students from attending conferences and symposia. Seth has been in touch with folks at the Arbor Day Foundation and they are interested in working with the group on the symposium. If enough interest is generated, the next meeting (after 2009) could be in Texas in 2011.

Two Standing Committee Reports were presented. Membership Committee chair Mark Wallace reported that membership in the working group is strong with more than 120 dues-paying members. This is indicative of interest in the working group.

Seth Riley presented the written Nominating and Elections Committee Report submitted by committee chair Allan O'Connell. Seth reported that Chris Moorman was elected Chair-Elect, Harry Zinn was re-elected Secretary-Treasurer, and the six elected Board members were: John Davis, Stephen DeStefano, Stanley Gehrt, Lesley Kordella, Allan O'Connell, and Mark Wallace. Sincere thanks were extended to Kieran Lindsey for her willingness to run for office. The report was accepted.

One item of Old Business, the working group web site, was discussed. The issue is whether or not the web site should be moved from the current host (Texas Tech University) to TWS headquarters. Some groups have moved to TWS but the system there is slow. Lesley Kordella, Chris Moorman, and Mark Wallace will investigate further the desirability of moving the site as well as any needed changes to site design.

Two items of New Business were discussed, symposia-workshops for the 2008 annual meeting, and urban wildlife training for professionals.

Regarding future symposia-workshops, some discussion focused on Charlie Nilon's proposal for a session on education. Mark Wallace will suggest to the College-University Working Group that they sponsor that proposal.

After discussion of other ideas, Lesley Kordella and Sherry Ruther accepted responsibility for submitting a proposal to TWS for a symposium at the 2008 Conference tentatively entitled "Conservation and Wildlife Planning for Urban Development."

The group also felt it should continue to sponsor one-day workshops at TWS Conferences. These have been well received the past few years. John Davis, Chris Moorman, Sherry Ruther, David Drake, and Lesley Kordella accepted responsibility for submitting a proposal for a workshop at the 2008 TWS Annual Conference.

Nicki Frey asked the group to consider co-sponsoring a half-day symposium entitled "Habitat and the Predation Process: Current Knowledge and Research Needs." The current proposal makes no reference to urban areas and some concern was expressed

that the group should not co-sponsor the proposal without clear relevance to the urban environment. A motion was unanimously passed giving the working group executive board the authority to decide whether or not to co-sponsor the session after further investigation into urban relevance.

David Drake proposed that the working group get involved with the subject of urban wildlife training for professionals. He suggested the group could offer guidelines on urban courses and hold training workshops for state/federal agency biologists and others. Clint Boal, John Davis, and Mark Wallace are in charge of investigating this initiative further.

### **Tucson Workshop**

The working group cosponsored an excellent all-day workshop at the annual meeting of TWS in Tucson, 22 September 2007. Other sponsors included the University of Arizona, Tucson Electric Power Company, Pima County Development Services Department, and Pima County Natural Resources, Parks, and Recreation Department. The workshop was organized by Lisa Harris of Harris Environmental Group and Bill Shaw of the University of Arizona. Twenty-five participants spent the day in the field visiting and discussing examples of urban research and planning activities in Tucson and Pima County. The first stop was Sentinel Peak, where Bill Shaw discussed the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. That plan focuses on six elements: habitat, corridors, cultural resources, mountain parks, ranch conservation, and riparian protection. Its conservation goal is to "Ensure the long-term survival of the full spectrum of plants and animals that are indigenous to Pima County through maintaining or improving the habitat conditions and

ecosystem functions necessary for their survival.” The plan has broad support in the county.

The second workshop stop was Sweetwater Wetlands. Here the city of Tucson is using wetlands to help treat some of the secondary effluent from a nearby wastewater treatment plant. Water from the wetlands goes to recharge basins and recovered water then is chlorinated and used for irrigation at public facilities. Thirty-five parks and 47 schools, including the University of Arizona, and several Pima County community college campuses, irrigate with reclaimed water. Sweetwater also provides wetland wildlife habitat and is a popular birding spot. More than 200 bird species



During the lunch break, Cecil Schwalbe, an ecologist with the U. S. Geological Survey and faculty member of the University of Arizona, taught the group something about gila monsters.

have been recorded there sometime during the year.

After a short walk from Sweetwater, the group was introduced to the problem of raptor deaths in connection with electric power lines. Biologists and Tucson Electric Power officials have designed bird guards that are effective in protecting raptors from electrocution.

During lunch, we learned about gila monsters, bats, bobcats, wildlife rehabilitation, and conservation planning. After lunch the group took a desert walk at the Arthur Pack Regional Park and Tucson Audubon’s Mason Center. Both areas protect saguaro-ironwood desert habitat of northwest Tucson. An excellent day in the field!



The shade of a towering saguaro felt good after a walk in the desert at the Arthur Pack Regional Park.

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