



# 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**

*Chris Moorman*

### **Urban Wildlife Management is Relevant to Everyone**

Several weeks ago I lectured to my *Wildlife Habitat Management* class on managing wildlife habitats in urban landscapes. The class of 45 students primarily is composed of wildlife and forest management majors, most of which are from rural communities in North Carolina. The students know and care little about wildlife in urban places, and are more interested in traditional plantation silviculture or game management in rural regions of the state. The few “urban” students tend to have dreams of saving animals in Africa, Australia, zoos, or some other exotic place, rather than in downtown Raleigh, North Carolina or its adjacent suburbs. As I began the lecture, the students probably were wondering “why is he talking about urban wildlife” or “how much time is left during today’s lecture period.” However, to my surprise, the students became unusually attentive as I discussed deer-vehicle collisions, bird collisions with TV towers, free-ranging domestic cats, nuisance coyotes, and backyard brush piles. I suspect that they were surprised to find out that these highly relatable topics were part of wildlife management.

I believe my experience in the classroom is analogous to the challenges we face within The Wildlife Society (TWS) and the profes-

sion as a whole. Wildlife management in urban areas often is not emphasized by state and federal agencies, by university fish and wildlife programs, or by individual biologists. Yet, because most of us can relate to the challenges of conserving wildlife in the places where we live and work, there is great opportunity to expand emphasis on issues related to urban wildlife. Recently, due in large part to the efforts of the Urban Wildlife Working Group (UWWG), urban wildlife conservation (i.e., not just management of nuisance wildlife) has been given a more visible role in TWS publications and at annual conferences. However, the UWWG must continue to work cooperatively to highlight the relevance of urban wildlife to TWS members, other wildlife professionals, and society at large.

I am honored to serve as Chair of the UWWG and look forward to working with other members to continue to increase the visibility of urban wildlife issues in TWS, foster communication among urban wildlife management professionals, and promote strategies to conserve wildlife in human-dominated environments. Also, I congratulate the new slate of officers and board members and thank them for their willingness to become involved. The board always is looking for working group members who are willing to help; please contact me at [chris\\_moorman@ncsu.edu](mailto:chris_moorman@ncsu.edu) if you would like to get involved or have ideas for improving the UWWG.

--Chris

## **Election Results**

Stan Gehrt was elected chair-elect, and Robert (Bob) McCleery, secretary-treasurer. The six board members are Erin Boydston, Paul Curtis, John Davis, Robert Denkhaus, Tommy Parker, and Ray Sauvajot. Congratulations all.

Also on the ballot was a proposed change of the chapter charter to allow for electronic balloting in the future. The proposed change passed.

## **Annual Meeting in Monterey**

The annual meeting of the working group was held Monday, September 21, 2009, in conjunction with the annual conference of The Wildlife Society. Twenty-one people were in attendance.

Minutes of the 2008 meeting were approved and it was reported that the group had a checking account balance of \$4,500. Highlights of the urban wildlife conference held at the University of Massachusetts in June were presented. The working group provided leadership in organizing and convening the meeting and Seth Riley and Steve DeStefano were particularly thanked. About 250 people attended, including some international folks. There was interest from attending land use planners to involve wildlife biologists in their planning process. The working group provided 10 scholarships of \$175 each to young professionals to attend the meeting and netted about \$5,300 on the conference.

Mark Wallace led a discussion regarding plans for the 2011 Urban Wildlife Conference to be held in Texas. He indicated that early efforts were considering an attendance of 500 and convening February or March. There was some discussion about

changing the name to something like Urban Ecology and Wildlife Management to make ecologists more welcome. Other thoughts were to promote the meeting better to local and city planners and other professionals involved in the metropolitan environment. If you have thoughts, please get in touch with Mark Wallace or John Davis (contact information at the end of the newsletter).

The group also discussed plans for the 2010 TWS annual conference. A full-day workshop to highlight urban wildlife issues at the venue site was proposed. Also proposed was a concurrent session to highlight the breadth of research and education occurring in the urban wildlife field. Both proposals were supported by majority vote.

Some discussion focused on increasing membership and internal involvement in the working group. Efforts in this regard will be to make the 2010 concurrent session more visible and to introduce the working group at the beginning of the session and after each break. And working group members will be invited specifically to be speakers at our sessions.

Current bylaws of the working group do not provide for electronic balloting. The group decided to include a motion with the ballot soon to be mailed to members that would modify the bylaws to allow electronic balloting.

For many years, Mark Wallace has maintained the working group website that is hosted by Texas Tech University. The Wildlife Society now has the capability of hosting working group websites but charges a fee for doing so. The group saw no reason to move the site at this time and thanked Mark for his work in maintaining the site at Texas Tech.

The Leadership Institute of TWS was discussed. The working group voted to donate \$250 to the institute to support its work and to increase awareness of the Urban Wildlife Working Group.

Working group chair David Drake introduced and welcomed incoming chair Chris Moorman. Chris proposed expansion of the working group website, including creation of a listserv or a wiki. The urban wildlife website could have information about how to access the listserv. Do we want people on our website to have personal pages? Could we link people's names to their home pages elsewhere? It would be better to have links to local resources, like local Extension agencies. We should be the go-to people for any urban wildlife management questions. Chris will work with Luanne Johnson, Becky McPeake, Tiffany Whitsitt, Seth Riley, and current Board members to address web development.

### Workshop

The working group co-sponsored, along with the Presidio Trust of San Francisco, National Park Service, Texas Tech University, and the University of Wisconsin, a workshop "Urban Wildlife and Parks in the San Francisco Bay Area" in conjunction with The Wildlife Society annual meeting in Monterey, California. Organizers were Seth Riley, Mark Wallace, and David Drake.

The California Bay Area has a long history of innovative efforts incorporating wildlife conservation into the planning, design, and management of parks as green space. The workshop provided an opportunity for attendees to exchange information about managing wildlife populations, protecting critical habitat, and responding to human-wildlife interactions in urban-suburban environments.

Attendees traveled to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco. Along the beach, participants looked for (and found) threatened western snowy plovers (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*). There are some issues with dogs there. Dogs are allowed off lead on the beach and regularly chase plovers and other birds. Residents are extremely protective of their right to take their dogs where they want, when they want.



Discussion of management efforts for threatened western snowy plovers at Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco, California, September 2009.

Workshop participants also visited a wetland restoration site at Mori Point, in Pacifica, south of San Francisco. The site is part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Site restoration is particularly important to the endangered San Francisco garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis tetrataenia*) and the threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*). Predator-prey dynamics are involved because the endangered species eats the threatened species. The garter snake lives only in San Mateo County, which is highly urbanized. Restoration includes replacement of a paved road

with an interpretive boardwalk that goes over the wetland area.



Discussion of wetland restoration at Mori Point, Pacifica, California, September 2009.

### **Certification**

TWS members recently approved several bylaws changes. One approved change now requires that all Certified Wildlife Biologists or Associate Wildlife Biologists be members of The Wildlife Society at the national level to maintain their certification status. This requires payment of national dues and maintaining membership thereafter, annually. Lack of annual dues payment will result in loss of certification. For more information on this change, please see The Wildlife Society website ([www.wildlife.org](http://www.wildlife.org)). There you can access a list of frequently asked questions (and answers) about this change.

### **A Message from the TWS Government Affairs Staff**

Comprehensive science-based legislation is critical to safeguarding our nation's wildlife and habitats. The Government Affairs Program of TWS works on behalf of its members to give a voice to the views of wildlife

professionals in the legislative and policy processes. But we can't do it without you! To ensure a bright future for wildlife, it is important that management and conservation policy and legislation be based on science generated by wildlife professionals, such as members of The Wildlife Society! We have three great tools to help you get involved in wildlife policy, either at the federal or local level:

- 1) Check out the [Government Affairs Toolkit](#) available on TWS' website. It will give you an overview of the Government Affairs program, how you can write a letter to Congress, and other useful policy information.
- 2) See recent editions of [The Wildlifer](#), TWS' monthly e-newsletter, to 'Take Action' on issues ranging from climate legislation to migratory bird conservation.
- 3) Check your inbox for [Wildlife Policy News](#), which comes out every other month, to stay up-to-date on policy initiatives.

We appreciate all of your efforts. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Laura Bies, Director of Government Affairs, at [laura@wildlife.org](mailto:laura@wildlife.org).

-- Mary Kazantseva and Angela Whitney

### **Journal Name Change**

Beginning with the spring 2010 issue, the Jack Berryman Institute will change the name of its peer-reviewed journal from **Human-Wildlife Conflicts** to **Human-Wildlife Interactions**. This was done in an effort to better reflect the journal's expanded mission of publishing papers dealing with wildlife management. For more information on the journal or submission instructions visit their website at [www.Berryman.Institute.org](http://www.Berryman.Institute.org).



Credit: Robert Savannah, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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