



The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of
The Wildlife Society

November 2010



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Message from President Kris Hundertmark

Our chapter has a history of providing position statements on topics of importance to resource management in Alaska. Nobody is closer to the resource issues of Alaska than our members are and our statements can carry a lot of weight. It is one of the most important services we provide to both the public and our profession. You can see all member-approved statements on our website along with technical reviews that the chapter has crafted. Currently, we are close to completing a position statement on intensive management that will be circulated for review once it is finished. Any member can propose a topic to be considered. If the executive board agrees, then we find interested individuals to put the statement together.

I mention this because we are currently seeking chapter members to volunteer to create a position statement on feeding of wildlife. There are many facets to this issue, such as the commonly accepted practice of feeding birds in the backyard all the way to allowing bears to become food-conditioned. For instance, there is a current controversy in Fairbanks concerning public feeding of waterfowl that congregate in a stretch of open water on the Chena River in the winter. Ramifications of this practice, such as disruption of migration behavior and potential for spread of disease, to name just two, need to be specified and discussed so that the public and policy makers can make informed decisions in the best interests of both society and the resource. We have the expertise within our ranks to craft such a document and I encourage you to consider serving your society and your profession by volunteering to help write one.

If you would like to volunteer to serve on a committee for preparing a draft position statement concerning public feeding of wildlife, please contact me at khundert@alaska.edu or at (907)474-7159. Thanks.

Another item of interest from this quarter is a letter that the chapter has drafted to send to Governor Parnell concerning the selection of people for the commissioner and director positions within the Department of Fish and Game. We have advised the governor to seek persons who support science-based policy development and who value the input of staff. We currently are asking the Alaska Chapter of The American Fisheries Society if they want to sign on before we send it. The final version of the letter will be posted on the website for your perusal.

Kris

News from Southcentral:

By David Battle, Southcentral Representative

People:

If you're saying to yourself "wait a minute, Dave Battle isn't the Southcentral Representative..." you've probably not heard that Chris Kaplan is leaving Alaska. His wife was offered a position in the state of Washington, and they have decided to "thaw out" for a while after many years in Alaska. We'll miss you Chris!

Dave Gustine joined the USGS Alaska Science Center research staff in late June and moved to Anchorage in early October. He has been hired as a research biologist and will be developing a research program to



evaluate influences of changing climate on habitat and forage quality for ungulates utilizing the Arctic Coastal Plain. He recently completed a PhD at UAF working with Perry Barboza to assess a stable isotope approach for evaluating protein status of muskox and caribou in winter.

Jason Schamber, who has been with USGS Alaska Science Center doing waterfowl research for the last 11 years, has taken a job with Alaska Dept of Fish & Game as a biologist in the statewide waterfowl program.

At the end of September, Matt Moran left one position with the Air Force...to take another position with the Air Force. Matt left 673 CES/CEANC, which handles wildlife management on Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, to take a position as 611 Natural Resource Program Manager CES/CEAN. In his new position, Matt will be working on remote air bases, ARS, and LRRS sights from Wake Island to Barter Island. His responsibilities will include projects on a wide variety of species, including a number of ESA and candidate species such as polar bear, short-tailed albatross, Eskimo curlew, sea lions, northern sea otter, whales, and black-footed albatross.

Bruce Dale has accepted the position of Regional Supervisor for the newly created ADF&G Region IV (Palmer, King Salmon, Dillingham, and Glennallen) for the Division of Wildlife Conservation in Palmer. Bruce brings over 25 years of wildlife management experience to the position. He has been with ADF&G since 1995, starting as the Fairbanks Area Biologist. Since 1999, Bruce has served as the Region II caribou biologist, and for the past several months he has served as the Acting Regional Supervisor for Region IV.

After a short "retirement" from government service, Grant Hilderbrand recently joined the National Park Service as Regional Wildlife Biologist in the Alaska Regional Office in Anchorage. Grant served for 5 years as Regional Supervisor for Region II of the Division of Wildlife Conservation, ADF&G, in Anchorage. He previously worked for several years on moose and brown bear research for DWC.

Mark Burch has accepted the position of Regional Supervisor for Region II (Grant's old position) at ADF&G. Most recently, Mark was serving as assistant Management Coordinator in Region II. He came to ADF&G from Indiana and worked as a Regional Planner with the Divisions of Sport Fish and Wildlife Conservation.

News:

The Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Science Conference was hosted by National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region, in Anchorage on October 10-11, 2010. The conference was open to the public, and included presentations by representatives from a variety of agencies, including National Marine Fisheries Service, National Marine Mammal Laboratory, Alaska Dept of Fish and Game, Alaska Sealife Center, Mote Marine Laboratory, Hollings Marine Laboratory, URS Corporation, Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, and LGL Alaska Research Associates. Presentations covered a wide range of topics associated with the Cook Inlet beluga, including population structure/abundance, predation, water quality, distribution/movements, social values associated with the whales, and strandings. A report containing the abstracts from the conference can be found at:

http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/whales/beluga/workshop/conference_abstract.pdf

News from the North:

By Stephen Arthur, Northern Representative

People:

Jerry Hill was recently hired as a biologist for Innoko National Wildlife Refuge. He previously worked for USDA Wildlife Services in WV.

Anne Orlando has been hired as the new lead wildlife biologist for the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge in Kotzebue, AK. Anne is no stranger to the Arctic or to remote living conditions. She recently lived in the eastern Canadian Arctic (Igloodik, Nunavut) and worked as the research coordinator for a cooperative international effort to assess the region's polar bear population and habitat. Anne earned her B.S. in wildlife biology at the University of Montana and PH.D in Landscape Ecology at the University of California, Davis. She has a wealth of field experience on a variety of species and in several resource disciplines. From pumas in California, seabirds in the Pribilof Islands to her international research on elephants in Timbuktu, her studies have taken her to North America, Latin America, Siberia, and sub-Saharan Africa. Anne has a strong commitment to involving local resource users in her work and to bridging traditional knowledge and western science. She joined the refuge staff on September 1st.

Nate Berg was recently hired as the Inventory and Monitoring Biologist at Tetlin NWR. Nate was working as a biologist with the Forest Service in Kamas, Utah prior to his move here. He earned his M.S. degree from Utah State University where his thesis work focused on



snowshoe hare/forest structure relationships in Wyoming. He has worked all over the western U.S. on projects involving lynx, wolves, wolverine, and cougar.

News from Southeast:

By Deborah Rudis, Southeast Representative

People & news:

Michelle Kissling (US Fish and Wildlife Service), Scott Gende (National Park Service), Paul Lukacs (Colorado Division of Wildlife), Steve Lewis (US Fish and Wildlife Service), Nick Hatch (US Fish and Wildlife Service/Oregon State University), and Sarah Schoen (US Fish and Wildlife Service) continued research on Kittlitz's Murrelets (*Brachyramphus brevirostris*) in Icy Bay (2002-present). In 2010, we captured and banded 283 Kittlitz's Murrelets, including five from previous years, and 23 Marbled Murrelets (*B. marmoratus*). We attached radio transmitters to 75 Kittlitz's using three different attachment techniques to evaluate bird behavior and transmitter retention.

In cooperation with John Piatt, Erica Madison, Mayumi Arimitsu, and David Douglas (all US Geological Survey), we attached six prototype 5g solar satellite transmitters to Kittlitz's Murrelets. In addition, we conducted at-sea surveys, monitored active nests, collected blood and feather samples for genetic and diet information, and conducted at-sea behavioral watches. In 2010, we also launched a study of the influence of aerial predators, primarily Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) and Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), on the local Kittlitz's Murrelet population in Icy Bay. We captured and attached satellite transmitters to both raptor species and will evaluate movements of prey (murrelets) in relation to those of predators (raptors). We also setup camera systems at raptor nests and collected prey remains to attempt to quantify the number of Kittlitz's Murrelets taken during the breeding season. This entire project involves multiple partners and will continue through the 2011 field season.

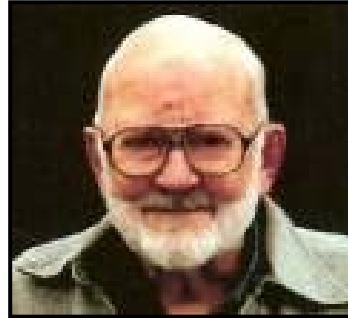
You can contribute!

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.

A Tribute to an Alaskan Wildlifer and Friend: John A. Morrison

By John Morrison's family and friends



Long-time Alaskan and wildlife ecologist, John Morrison, passed away at 85 of natural causes at his home in Anchorage, September 19, 2010.

John was born December 1, 1924, in Wichita, Kansas, to Ernest and Mary

Morrison. He graduated from Wichita East High in 1943. He married Joyce "Jodie" McNutt in Wichita on August 27, 1950. The couple recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

John's lifelong passion for the outdoors and environment began, he declared, when he was age 10. Before pursuing that passion as a career, John served first as a purser and pharmacist's mate for the U.S. Maritime Service in the southwest Pacific and Atlantic Oceans (1943-47) and then as a surveyor and aerial photograph analyst for the U.S. Army in the Philippines (1948-51). Following his military service, he majored in wildlife technology at the University of Montana in Missoula, where he earned Bachelor of Science (1955) and Master of Science (1957) degrees. During a break from academics, John studied elk, deer, goats, sheep, and moose as a regional big game manager for Idaho Department of Fish and Game. John then attended Washington State University and earned a Ph. D. (1965) studying the social behavior and reproductive biology of the Uganda kob antelope in Uganda, East Africa.

John's career in wildlife spanned over 30 years. He worked for 2 years with the U.S. Public Health Service studying the ecology, behavior, and pathology of rhesus monkeys in Puerto Rico. From 1967 to 1975, he was the Unit Leader of the Oklahoma Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit and Professor of Zoology at Oklahoma State University. He supervised operations of the Unit in creating and conducting ecological research on various wildlife species and habitats. He then worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fort Collins, Colorado where he supervised a multidisciplinary group of specialists in wildlife, fisheries, range management, economics, information transfer, environmental quality, and statistics assigned to develop new, comprehensive databases for use in environmental impact analyses.



John arrived in Alaska in 1978 to work as Chief of the Technical Services Division for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Anchorage. He supervised eight projects and project leaders concerned with wetland inventories, coastal ecosystems analyses, analyses of environmental contaminants, monitoring outer continental shelf oil development, in-stream flow analyses, information transfer, Landsat remote-sensing analyses, and computer services.

After "retirement" in 1985, he was an adjunct professor at UAA and APU, and he had his own business in ecological/environmental consulting, education, and information development. The Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 brought John out of retirement to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. For 2 years, he supervised a staff of 6 to 8 biologists and technicians in monitoring the effects of the oil spill on fish and wildlife and evaluated the progress of cleanup actions. John stayed with ADF&G until 1996, working on two special projects. He coordinated ADF&G assistance to the Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development and to the Big Game Commercial Services Board in designing and instituting a new system for regulating the hunting guide industry. He also represented the State of Alaska in interactions with federal agencies and public advisory organizations.

Retiring again in 1996, John pursued fishing and hunting interests. He also volunteered extensively as a Boy Scout assistant leader, firearms training instructor, life coach for his grandchildren, and consultant for the Wood Bison Restoration Project, among others.

John received many awards for outstanding conservation work; he earned recognition and respect from peers throughout his long career. He stayed active in Safari Club International, Alaska Fly Fishers, and kept contact with many lifelong friends. John was also an active member of The Wildlife Society and was a Certified Wildlife Biologist. John's career as a wildlifer was documented earlier this year as part of The Wildlife Society's Celebrating Our Wildlife Conservation Heritage Project.

John's family requests that memorial donations be made to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, P.O. Box 949, Girdwood 99587, or the donor's charity of choice.

— *John Morrison's family and friends*

Acoustic Monitoring of Bats

By Karen Blejwas, ADF&G Regional Wildlife Biologist, Juneau

Five species of bats have been documented in Southeast Alaska: little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), Keen's myotis (*M. keenii*), California myotis (*M. californicus*), long-legged myotis (*M. volans*), and silver-haired bat (*Lasiurus noctivagans*). All five were identified in Alaska's State Wildlife Action Plan as species of concern due to a lack of basic information about their distribution, abundance, habitat use, population structure, life history, and migration habits. To help address these information gaps, we initiated an acoustic monitoring study of bats in the Juneau area in April 2010, using a combination of active and passive monitoring with Anabat detectors. We actively surveyed all or part of 32 hiking trails along the road system to obtain baseline information on distribution, relative abundance, and habitat use of bats in the Juneau area. Bats were detected on every trail we surveyed except one. Several "hot spots" of high activity were observed. Although the locations of the hot spots changed over the course of the season, all were in the Mendenhall Valley. We also established two passive monitoring stations - one at a maternity roost site and the other near a lake - to obtain baseline information on daily and seasonal activity patterns of bats and to determine the timing of emergence in spring and emigration/hibernation in fall. Bats were already active at both monitoring sites when they were established in mid-April. Activity dropped off sharply at both sites in early October.

Passive monitoring will continue over the fall and winter and will expand to include potential hibernacula sites. We plan to capture and radiotag bats next fall to identify where Juneau bats are overwintering and to help locate hibernacula. We will also use the captures to build a local call library to assist with analyzing the acoustic data for species identification. We will be intensifying our efforts to establish a Citizen Science Acoustic Monitoring project to continue the active surveys in the Juneau area next spring. We will also be expanding the passive monitoring to other communities around Southeast to examine regional variation in activity patterns and the timing of emergence and migration/hibernation.

We would like to thank Aaron Poe, Chugach National Forest and Dave Schirokauer, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park for loaning us their Anabat equipment and Cori Lausen, Birchdale Ecological, Ltd.,



British Columbia for guidance on setting up and operating the equipment and analyzing the call files.

Mountain Goat Field Research, Southeast

By Kevin White, ADF&G Regional Wildlife Biologist, Juneau

In 2010, ADFG regional staff biologists in cooperation with local and federal agency counterparts initiated mountain goat research activities in the Haines/Skagway area, Baranof Island and the Cleveland Peninsula, in addition to continuing work on the Lynn Canal population (started in 2005). Currently, a total of 96 animals are outfitted with GPS and/or VHF radio-collars across these four areas. The specific objectives of these projects vary but generally focus on habitat selection, movement patterns, vital rate estimation, and aerial survey technique development. Underlying conservation concerns stimulating research efforts involve mountain goat population responses to mining activities, helicopter tourism, hydroelectric development, and harvest management. Funding for these cooperative research projects has been provided by various entities including ADFG, ADOT/PF, Coeur Alaska, BLM, and USFS. In addition, ADFG has been collaborating with the University of Alberta (Aaron Shafer) relative to mountain goat population and landscape genetics in Alaska. One compelling mountain goat genetics finding suggests that native mountain goats existed in a “cryptic refugia” during the last glacial maximum on Baranof Island. As a result, the well-documented 1923 introduction of mountain goats to Baranof Island may, in fact, have been a population augmentation rather than an introduction of mountain goats to non-native range, as has been long believed.

FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALASKA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Centennial Hall
Juneau, ALASKA
April 5-7, 2011

You are invited to join fellow wildlife researchers, managers, educators, students, and administrators from across the state for the annual meeting of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society. The meeting will be held at Centennial Hall in beautiful downtown Juneau.

The meeting will include a one-day workshop on “Climate Change Adaptation Frameworks” sponsored by the Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center, half-day special sessions on “Alpine Ecology” and “Second Growth Forest Management for Wildlife Habitat”, open paper sessions, a poster session, and a banquet.

Tell us about what you’re doing! Members are encouraged to present talks or posters regarding wildlife-related research, management, education, recreation, and biometrics. We seek presentations on a wide range of topics, including wildlife and habitat management projects, research findings, data analysis and study design, new field techniques, conservation issues, land-use and wildlife planning, marine wildlife, human dimensions, education, wildlife recreation, wildlife economics, and non-game programs.

The deadline for submission of abstracts for papers or posters is March 1, 2011. Guidelines on formatting and submitting abstracts, oral presentations, and posters will be available soon under Chapter Conference 2011 on the Alaska Chapter website at: <http://joomla.wildlife.org/alaska>.

A second call for papers, with details about lodging and meeting registration will be distributed in January and also will be posted on the Alaska Chapter website.

Student Travel and Presentation Awards

There will be travel awards for students, with priority going to those wishing to present a paper or paper at the meeting. Student oral presentations and posters will be judged and the top two presenters will win cash awards.

Direct inquiries to Mike Goldstein, Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center, 907-796-6269, migoldstein@uas.alaska.edu, or Steve Brockmann, US Fish and Wildlife Service, 907-780-1181, steve_brockmann@fws.gov

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Announcements

10th National Wild Turkey Symposium: Managing Wild Turkeys in The Face of Uncertainty to be held in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. January 11-13, 2011. Register at www.wildturkeysymposium.org

The Natural Resources Communication Workshop to be held at California State University, Chico. January 10-14. Sponsored by the Western Section of The Wildlife Society. Please direct inquiries to jhooper@csuchico.edu

Alaska Chapter of TWS Annual Meeting to be held in Juneau, Alaska. April 5 - 7, 2011: The deadline for submitting abstracts for papers and posters is March 1, 2011.

13th Northern Furbearer Conference to be held in Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. April 12 - 15, 2011: First call for expression of Interest. Send abstracts for oral and poster presentations or discussion panel ideas to: Sherry.wabisca@gov.yk.ca.

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.

The Alaska Marine Science Symposium to be held at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage January 17-21, 2011. The Symposium will feature presentations on the latest research on oceanography and marine ecosystems, No agenda is available yet, but from all accounts, past Symposia have been outstanding. For more information, visit <http://www.alaskamarinescience.org/>.

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

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



Alaska Chapter Leadership

Your 2010-2012 Executive Board

President: Kris Hundertmark, Department of Biology and Wildlife, 412 Irving 1, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK 99775, khundert@alaska.edu, phone (907) 474-7159, fax (907) 474-6967.

President-Elect: Jerry Hupp, USGS-Alaska Science Center, 4210 University Drive, Anchorage, AK 99508, jerry_hupp@usgs.gov, phone (907) 474-7159, fax (907) 474-6967.

Past-President: Howard Golden, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, howard.golden@alaska.gov, phone (907) 267-2177, fax (907) 267-2433.

Secretary-Treasurer: Todd Rinaldi, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, todd.rinaldi@alaska.gov, phone (907) 267-2267, fax (907) 267-2433.

Northern Representative: Steve Arthur, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701, steve.arthur@alaska.gov, phone 459-7213, fax (907) 452-6410.

Southcentral Representative: David Battle, Natural Resources Specialist, Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, 724 Postal Service Loop Road, #4500, JBER, AK 99505-4500, david.battle@us.army.mil Phone (907) 384-3909.

Southeast Representative: Deb Rudis, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 3000 Vintage Blvd., Suite 201, Juneau, AK 99801, deborah_rudis@fws.gov, phone (907) 780-1183.

Newsletter Editor (non-voting): Cindi Jacobson, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, MS281, Anchorage, AK 99503, cynthia_jacobson@fws.gov, phone (907) 786-3508.

UAF Student Chapter TWS Representative (non-voting): Jessica Bodle, UAF Student Chapter of TWS, c/o Christine Hunter, Department of Biology and Wildlife, 412 Irving 1, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK 99775, uafwildlife@gmail.com.

Webmaster

Elizabeth Solomon, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 43961 Kalifornsky Beach Rd, Ste. B Soldotna, AK 99669-8367, elizabeth.solomon@alaska.gov, phone (907)260-2927.

AK Chapter Regions

