



The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

May 2012



Message from President Jerry Hupp

First, I'd like to thank the Alaska Chapter for the opportunity to serve as president for the next two years. It's been fun so far. I've really enjoyed the chance to interact with members and to work with a truly dedicated group of people. We have a great Executive Board that consists of Grant Hilderbrand (President-elect), Kris Hundertmark (Past-president), Todd Rinaldi (Secretary-treasurer), Karen Blejwas (Southeast Representative), Cara Staab (Southcentral Representative), Kaiti Ott (Northern Representative), Liz Solomon (Webmaster), Elizabeth Manning (Newsletter Editor), and Jessica Bodle (UAF Student Chapter Representative). Thanks to those folks for stepping forward to become officers in the Chapter. I'd like to thank outgoing Executive Board members Howard Golden, Deborah Rudis, Dave Battle, and Steve Arthur for their service. Thanks also to Kris Hundertmark for leading the Chapter the past two years.

Next, I'd like to address membership and involvement in the Alaska Chapter. I know of a few colleagues that when queried about their membership in a professional society like TWS respond with something to the effect of "Why? I can get their journal online." This is true. Back in the "old days" access to scientific publications came only through membership in professional societies or a visit to a brick and mortar library. Online access has changed that. For a wide collection of journals, I can access any issue from the first to the most recent through my agency's electronic library. Online access is a good thing, but it raises the question – why bother to belong to a professional organization such as TWS if

you have online access to its journals? It's not an unfair question. But neither is the question of whether a professional organization is more than its publications.

Clearly, I think TWS offers more than its publications. So, what do we gain? One is a voice, if we choose to use it. Science-based management of wildlife has always faced challenges, be it political intervention in resource decisions, lack of funds for professionals to do their jobs, or the "false prophecies" of those outside our profession who offer misguided solutions to conservation issues. Our Chapter's turf ranges from temperate rainforest to the Arctic and includes no small number of entities who voice their opinions on how Alaska's wildlife should best be managed. Ours can serve as an objective voice for what's scientifically correct in wildlife conservation and as an advocate for the application of the best available science in resource decisions. But, it takes an active membership to make that voice effective.

A second benefit of membership in the Alaska Chapter is the chance to be involved in a community of wildlife professionals from a diverse array of institutions. As with any community, there may be not be agreement among members on some issues. That's okay. Debate and respectful disagreement are important aspects of science. But there needs to be a forum where diverse views on resource management can be discussed.

Through our annual meeting, the development of position statements, or when we draft

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- Get Involved, Volunteers Needed! p. 7
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public comment on a resource issue, the Alaska Chapter provides opportunities for us to drop our institutional caps and to speak freely as colleagues. These interactions outside of our normal workday environment are vital to the health of the profession. It's important that the Chapter provides those opportunities.

Clearly there are other individual benefits of TWS membership — increased professional credibility, a means to stay current on science and management issues, opportunities for continuing education, and a chance to purchase the really cool Alaska Chapter baseball cap! So, I think it's good to periodically ask ourselves what we gain through membership and also through active involvement in the Chapter. Elsewhere in the newsletter are articles on trends in our membership and a request for volunteers for Chapter committees. Both address topics that make worthy goals for the Chapter: increasing the number of members, and more importantly, increasing professional involvement in the Chapter. We have some really dedicated people doing important work on wildlife issues for the Chapter. For that, I'm grateful. But, given the diversity and magnitude of wildlife-related issues facing Alaska, we can always use additional help.

The other members of the Executive Board and I are looking forward to the next two years. One of our goals is to increase public recognition of the Alaska Chapter as an objective voice for scientific management of wildlife, and to exercise that voice when the need arises. But, we're also here to listen. So, if you have suggestions or criticisms regarding activities of the Alaska Chapter, please contact me at jhupp@usgs.gov. Or, pass your comments on to your regional representative. I know a lot of us are gearing up for summer field work. I hope everyone has a safe and productive summer, and can find some time to enjoy the wonders of the Great Land.

-Jerry Hupp, President

Get to know the new TWS-AK Chapter Executive Board, and your regional representative. Email them with ideas, concerns, or newsletter items.

President: Jerry Hupp, jhupp@usgs.gov

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New memberships and renewals are available on-line at The Wildlife Society (<http://joomla.wildlife.org>). Click on membership to obtain membership forms.



Can Alaska Beat Texas? Just a few new members would do it!

Alaskans rarely pass up an opportunity to remind Texans of their second place ranking in state geographic extent. Not only is Alaska >2 times larger than Texas, it also has more of things most of us hold dear – wild land and wildlife. However, there is one area where Texas has bested Alaska; the state of grasshoppers and pocket gophers has more members in its TWS chapter than the state of grizzlies and mountain goats. But, the good news is that we're currently a close second with 224 members to Texas' 231. So, with some effort we can surpass Texas to take our place as the largest state chapter within TWS.

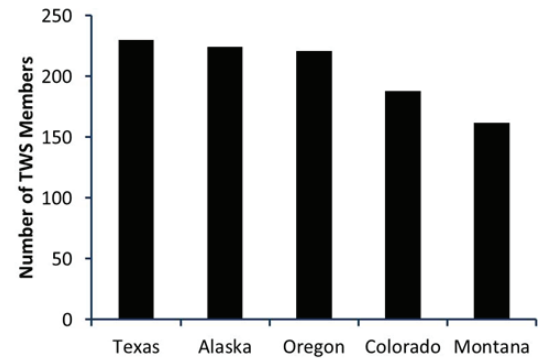


Figure 1. Number of TWS members in the five largest state and provincial chapters in North America, 2012

Being able to boast to our Texas colleagues of having the larger chapter is only for fun. There are more important reasons to bring new members to the Chapter. New members bring new perspectives and new energy. Those are important to keep any organization from becoming stale. Additional members increase our base and provide us greater credibility when we speak as a representative for professional wildlife management in Alaska.

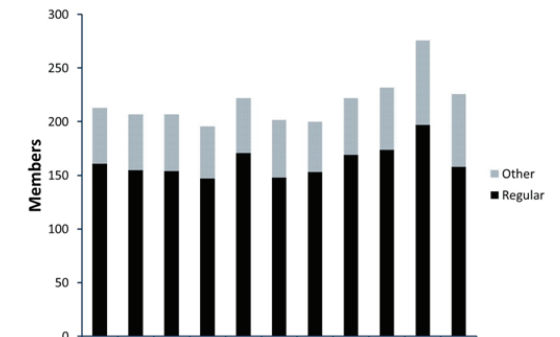


Figure 2. Number of members in the Alaska Chapter of TWS. Retired and student members are included in "other."

Our membership has been steady over most of the past decade with slight increase in recent years (Figure 2). The 2012 numbers currently are a bit lower than last year. However, TWS has switched from annual renew at the start of the calendar year to renew in any month, so we will likely add members as the year progresses.

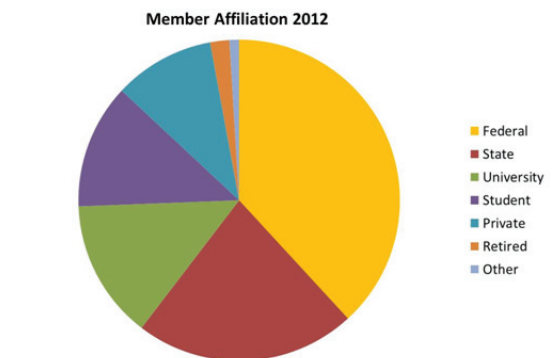


Figure 3. Member affiliation in the Alaska Chapter of TWS, 2012.

Not only is Chapter membership relatively large, but it's also diverse (Figure 3). Currently, about 38% of members work for federal agencies, 26% are students or work in academia, 22% are employed by state agencies, and about 10% work in the private sector. Small percentages are retired (2%) or live outside of Alaska (1%). A diverse membership is one of our strengths. Those who work in different arenas of the profession often have differing perspectives regarding wildlife conservation. Those diverse views are valuable when we come together as a Chapter to examine issues related to Alaska's wildlife. The Chapter also serves an important role where members from different institutions can come together for "cross-fertilization" of ideas.

So, overall the trend in Chapter membership is healthy, and we have consistently been one of the larger state or provincial chapters in North America. But there's always room for improvement. As noted elsewhere in the newsletter, we're looking for volunteers to serve on our Membership Committee. Committee members would consider ways of increasing professional involvement in the Chapter and just maybe find a way to beat Texas.



News from the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Alaska Chapter

The 2012 Annual Meeting of the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society was held in Anchorage from April 10-13. The theme of the conference was Conservation Ethics with a plenary session featuring Michael Nelson of Michigan State University and John Vucetich of Michigan Tech University, co-founders of the Conservation Ethics Group. In addition, the plenary featured talks on wilderness, predator management, and subsistence. Other special sessions focused on bat ecology, human-wildlife interactions, and trans-boundary management. Workshops on map-making, wildlife conflict first response, and underwater egress were also part of the conference. In total, 152 registered attendees participated in the conference representing two state agencies, seven federal agencies, five universities, six companies, four non-governmental organizations, and several retired or unaffiliated members.

Twenty-five students attended the conference, eight of which were supported by travel grants. Awards were given for student presentations and posters. Karen Mager won first place for her presentation, "Genetic population structure of Alaskan caribou (*Rangifer tarandus granti*) at multiple spatial scales: influences of geography, demography, and ecotype". Second place went to Joe Welch for his presentation, "Nutritional ecology of moose in an urban landscape". In the poster category, Tania Lewis' poster "Population and landscape genetics of brown bears in a recently deglaciated fjord: Glacier Bay, Alaska" was awarded first place and second place went to Emily Garrett's poster titled, "Body condition of female caribou at first reproduction". It is always great to see significant student participation.

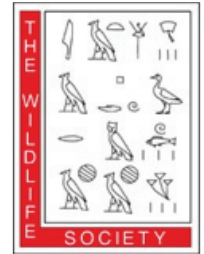
Following the conference, President Hupp organized a survey of both attendees and members who did not attend the conference to find ways to improve the conference and increase attendance. The response rate for the survey was relatively high and greatly appreciated. The majority of the comments and findings were positive and underscored aspects we will strive to continue. However, pointed criticisms were

of value as well as they identify areas in which we want to improve. Most of the negative comments addressed the

lay out of the poster session as it impeded viewing and discussion. The primary reason folks did not attend was conflicts with other obligations and field work. Scheduling has long been a challenge given the diversity of work done by wildlife professionals in Alaska and weather and travel issues. Overall, the Marriott received high marks as a venue. The survey is posted for member review on the Chapter Website (<http://joomla.wildlife.org/Alaska/>).

A huge thank you to everyone that helped make the conference possible. Special thanks to the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Geological Survey, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and University of Alaska Fairbanks for their support. We are already looking forward to next year's conference in Fairbanks. Start thinking of ideas for sessions and workshops as we will be looking for suggestions and volunteers in the coming months.

-Grant Hilderbrand, President-Elect



Announcements

Upcoming Conferences

Alaska Bird Conference, Oct. 22-26: The Alaska Bird Conference will be held in Anchorage in October 2012. Presentations by professional and amateur ornithologists on any aspect of Alaska's birds are welcome. The deadline for abstract submission is 15 August 2012. Contact Audrey Taylor (audreyrebeccataylor@gmail.com) or John Pearce (jpearce@usgs.gov) for more information.

American Society of Mammalogists, June 22-26: The 92nd annual meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists Meeting will be held June 22-26, 2012, at the Peppermill Resort Spa and Casino in Reno, Nevada. Visit <http://www.dce.k-state.edu/conf/mammalogists/> for more information.

***You can contribute! We need your story ideas!
Help keep AK-TWS members informed and connected.***

Are you working on an interesting project you'd like to share with other AK-TWS members? Do you have news to share with colleagues? Please make note of upcoming events, projects, personnel changes, issues, or anything else of interest to other AK-TWS members, and pass them on to your regional representative by July 27, 2012 for the August issue. If you know of something that would make an interesting newsletter article and can't write it up yourself, please contact newsletter editor Elizabeth Manning at elizabeth.manning@alaska.gov or 907-267-2168. Help us make this an interesting and informative newsletter!



Recent Publications by TWS-AK Chapter Members

This is a new newsletter item. We would like to highlight the contributions of Chapter members to wildlife science. If you or your colleagues have published articles in peer-reviewed journals during 2012, please send the citation to Elizabeth Manning (elizabeth.manning@alaska.gov). The following are some papers that were recently published by members:

Burek-Huntington, K. A., D. M. Mulcahy, A. M. Doroff, and T. O. Johnson. 2012. Sarcomas in Three Free-ranging Northern Sea Otters (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*) in Alaska. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 48:483-487.

Lindberg, M.S. 2012. A review of designs for capture-mark-recapture studies in discrete time. *Journal of Ornithology* 152:355-370.

McIntyre, C. L. and J. H. Schmidt. 2012. Ecological and environmental correlates of territory occupancy and breeding performance of migratory Golden Eagles *Aquila chrysaetos* in interior Alaska. *Ibis* 154:124-135.

Milakovic, B., K. L. Parker, D. D. Gustine, R. J. Lay, A. B. D. Walker, and M. P. Gillingham. 2012. Seasonal habitat use and selection by grizzly bears in northern British Columbia. *Journal of Wildlife Management*: 76:170-180.

Milani, J. F., H. Wilson, M. Ziccardi, R. LeFebvre, and C. Scott. 2012. Hematology, plasma chemistry, and bacteriology of wild tundra swans (*Cygnus columbianus*) in Alaska. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 48:212-215.

Schmidt, J. H., K. L. Rattenbury, J. P. Lawler, and M. C. MacCluskie. 2012. Using distance sampling and hierarchical models to improve estimates of Dall's sheep abundance. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 76:317-327.

Udevitz, M. S., and P. J. P. Gogan. 2012. Estimating survival rates with time series of standing age-structure data. *Ecology* 93:726-732

New Books

Fish Politics and Wolf Wars: A History of Fish and Game Management in Alaska

By Wayne Regelin

I enjoyed writing my book about the history of fish and game management in Alaska. During the two-year process I learned a great deal about Alaska's history, writing and the publishing business. I did not intend to write a book when I started. I simply wanted to document the leaders within the Department of Fish and Game since statehood. However, the project soon expanded into a book. I think people interested in fish and game management in Alaska will find it informative and a useful reference. The book covers the period of exploitation of marine mammals by the Russians, decades of mismanagement of the salmon fishery by the federal bureaucracy during Territorial days, predator management from Territorial days to the present time and rebuilding of the salmon fishery from the remnants remaining at statehood. The largest section of the book deals with major issues impacting fish and game management since statehood, including the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, subsistence use, oil development, and logging on the Tongass National Forest. You can read more about the book on the web site, www.arcticloonpress.com and also order it from the web site if you are interested.



TWS-AK Chapter Volunteers Needed

The Alaska Chapter of TWS cannot exist without the efforts of volunteers. Chapter volunteers serve as officers, publish the newsletter, organize the annual meeting, and develop policy statements regarding the Chapter's position on wildlife conservation issues. They're not always easy jobs but they can be rewarding. Volunteer work with the Chapter can increase your professional contacts and give you a chance to work with people that you might not otherwise collaborate with during your regular job. We are seeking volunteers to serve on several standing committees established through our bylaws. If you are interested in serving on one or more of these committees, please contact Jerry Hupp (jhupp@usgs.gov) or Grant Hilderbrand (grant_hilderbrand@nps.gov).

Annual Meeting Committee

We need 4-6 people to help organize the Chapter's next annual meeting in Fairbanks. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for early April, 2013 and will be jointly held with the Northwest Section of TWS. We need help with logistical arrangements in Fairbanks and development of the program. The annual meeting is a great opportunity to highlight wildlife conservation issues in the host region. So, ideas and energy from members in the Interior are especially welcome, but involvement is open to all Chapter members. If you are interested in serving on the organizing committee for the 2013 meeting, please contact Grant or Jerry.

Membership

The Membership Committee looks for ways to encourage wildlife professionals to join The Wildlife Society and Alaska Chapter. We would like some creative, energetic folks that would be willing to come up with novel ideas to boost Chapter membership.

Conservation Review

This committee reviews legislative proposals, administrative regulations, environmental assessments and impact statements, and other issues pertaining to wildlife or habitat in Alaska. It provides recommendations to the Board regarding any actions that should be taken by the Chapter. Dave Yokel has kept an eye on affairs in the Alaska Legislature, but we could use additional help with review in other areas.

Education and Information

The Board would like to improve the Chapter's outreach to the public on wildlife-related issues. We need some people that would be willing to look at means of doing so, and to develop information products that we can distribute to various outlets.



Regional News

Southcentral

By Cara Staab, Southcentral Representative

People

BLM-Alaska has welcomed **Sarah Bullock** to its team of wildlife biologists. Sarah reported for duty at the Glennallen Field Office in late February. She hailed from the Tongass National Forest where she was a program manager for the Anan Wildlife Observatory. Prior to that, Sarah worked on a variety of critters in the lower 48 including white-tailed and mule deer, sage grouse, migratory birds, bats, and fish. Sarah is originally from Kentucky and earned her Master's degree from Texas A&M's Ceasar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute.

Dr. Lance McNew joined the USGS Alaska Science Center's landbird research team as a Research Wildlife Biologist in February. Lance has previously worked as a wildlife research biologist at Kansas State University and deer research biologist for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. He received his Ph.D. from Kansas State University in 2010, where he studied the interactive effects of human landscape alteration on grassland bird ecology. His has expertise in the application of mark-recapture statistics, the use of demographic models for analyses of population viability, and the integration of geographic information systems into population analyses to examine spatially-explicit population processes.

Dr. Courtney Amundson joined the USGS Alaska Science Center in March as a term Research Wildlife Biologist to develop relative abundance and distribution maps of breeding birds in the Southwest Alaska Network (SWAN) National Parks. Courtney finished her PhD at the University of Minnesota in 2010 on the impacts of predator removal on waterfowl offspring survival and recruitment in the prairies. Since graduating, she has held post-

docs assessing the impacts of the BP oil spill on wintering waterfowl, examining trends and distribution of the Eastern population of sandhill cranes, and outlining a rapid assessment method to quantify wind energy development risks to grassland-dependent wildlife. Her interests include predator-prey dynamics, avian population dynamics, harvest management, waterbird ecology, energy development/wildlife interactions, applied statistics, and climate change. Courtney is excited to apply her background to the unique ecosystems and issues facing Alaska's natural resources. She can be reached at camundson@usgs.gov.

Southeast

By Karen Blejwas, Southeast Representative

People

After nearly a decade serving as ADF&G's Education Specialist in Southeast Alaska, **Kristen Romanoff** has accepted a promotion and is now overseeing the Division of Wildlife Conservation's statewide education program. **Tennie Bentz**, a Haines middle school teacher, has been selected to replace Kristen. Tennie holds a B.S. in biology and a M.A. in teaching from the University of Alaska, Southeast. She and her family will be moving back to Juneau from Haines, where she has been teaching math, science, social studies and outdoor education at Haines Middle School since 2007. She is a certified ADF&G Hunter Education Instructor, and regularly coordinates outdoor skills/cold water safety clinics for students and community members. Tennie will begin her new job at ADF&G on June 18.

Anthony Crupi, who served the past several years as ADF&G's Assistant Area Wildlife Biologist for the Douglas, Haines, and Yakutat areas, has accepted a new position in the Douglas office as a regional research biologist, with an immediate focus on bear research. Anthony



Regional News-continued

worked as a Habitat Biologist I/II with Division of Sport Fish from 2005 – 2010. He got his B.A. from the Duke University in 1991 and his M.S. in ecology from the Utah State University in 2004. Anthony's thesis was on "Foraging behavior and habitat use patterns of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*) in relation to human activity and salmon abundance on a coastal Alaskan stream." He brings an excellent understanding of the natural history and management of Southeast bears to this position along with good quantitative and GIS skills. Recruitment is underway to hire a new Assistant Area Wildlife Biologist for the Douglas office.

News

There's a new wetland functional analysis tool available for Southeast Alaska. The Wetland Ecological Services Protocol for Alaska: Southeast (WESPAK-SE) uses a combination of office-based review of online maps and other resource information, and on-site observations made during a half-day visit to the site, to assign numerical scores for each of 18 wetland functions. Functions assessed include water and sediment retention; various water quality and nutrient cycling parameters; habitat for fish, aquatic invertebrates, amphibians, birds, mammals, native plants, and pollinators; subsistence other public uses; and ecological sensitivity, stressors, and condition. The methodology is intended for use in establishing

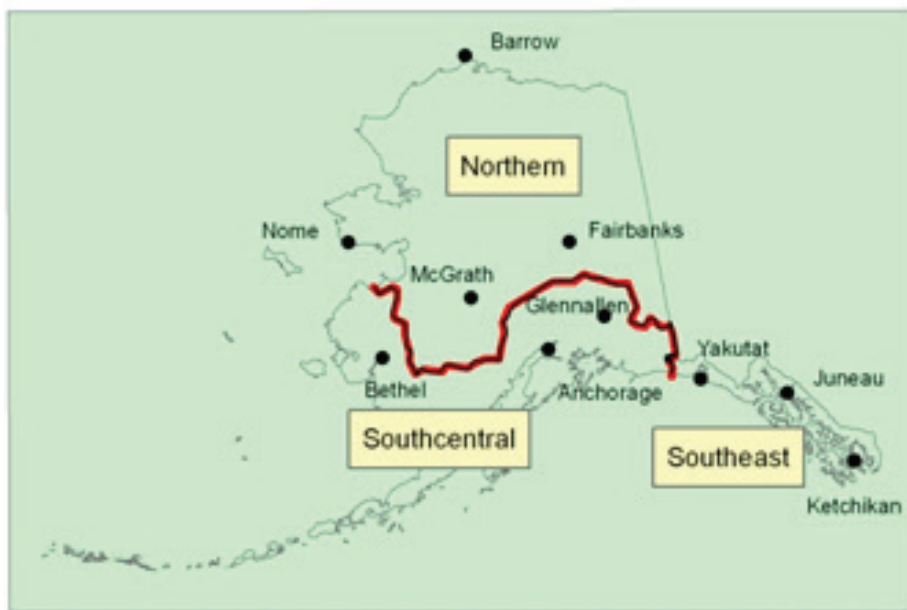
functions lost to development projects that could (or should) be replaced at mitigation sites, and will be used by the Southeast Alaska Land Trust to evaluate mitigation parcels protected under their in-lieu fee program. Development of the methodology was funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A manual and related information are available at the SEAL Trust's website: <http://southeastalaskalandtrust.org/>

Northern

By Kaiti Ott, Northern Representative

Personnel News

Jennifer Mitchell McMillan has joined the Bureau of Land Management as the Ecologist for the Central Yukon Field Office in Fairbanks. Most recently, Jen has been working in Fairbanks as the Assistant Regional Fire Ecologist for the National Park Service. Jennifer is a local of Fairbanks and received her degrees from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She is particularly interested in habitat, avian and vegetation ecology.



TWS-Alaska Chapter Regions (Northern, Southcentral, Southeast)



2012 Pete Isleib Award Nominations Wanted

The Award's History: M.E. "Pete" Isleib was an extraordinary birder who took his passion for birds to scientific and recreational heights. He moved to Alaska in the early 1960s and made his living as a commercial fisherman. He was known for his ornithological skills and his conservation work in Alaska. One of his greatest contributions was his study of birds in the Copper River Delta and Prince William Sound area. His book, co-authored with Brina Kessel, *Birds of the North Gulf Coast-Prince William Sound Region, Alaska*, provided some of the earliest data on avifauna of the area. Pete Isleib died in an accident while refitting his fishing vessel in Naknek, Alaska in 1993.

The Isleib Award for "outstanding contributions to bird conservation in Alaska" has been presented at each Alaska Bird Conference since 1994. Past recipients of this prestigious award are Stan Senner (1994), G. Vernon Byrd (1997), Calvin Lensink (1998), Jim King (2000), Dan Gibson (2002), Brina Kessel (2004), the team of Bruce Conant and John "Jack" Hodges (2006), Robert Gill (2008), and Dirk Derksen (2010).

Nomination Material: We encourage interested parties to submit a nomination package for someone who meets the following criteria: 1) The nominee must have contributed in some important way to bird conservation through research, policy work, volunteer work, or outreach/education; 2) the nominee may live out of state, so long as the bulk of his/her work was conducted in Alaska or pertained to conservation of Alaska birds; and 3) the award can either be for cumulative lifetime achievement or for major contribution(s) at some point in the nominee's career.

The Isleib Award committee requests that you provide the following in your nomination package:

- 1) Nominee's full name and affiliation
- 2) Short biography of relevant work in Alaska
- 3) Description of significant contributions or cumulative lifetime achievement toward bird conservation in Alaska
- 4) Name, contact info, and relationship to nominee of person submitting nomination

Nomination packages should be limited to one double-spaced page with 1" borders on all sides, with text in Times New Roman 12 font. Send word document to Rick Lanctot (Richard_lanctot@fws.gov) by Sept. 1, 2012 and use "Isleib Award" as a subject heading. Please note: while not required for the nomination, a recent high quality photograph of the eventual recipient will be required.



Alaska Chapter Leadership

Your 2010-2012 Executive Board

President: Jerry Hupp, USGS-Alaska Science Center, 4210 University Drive, Anchorage, AK 99508, jhupp@usgs.gov, phone (907) 786-7096.

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