



The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

May 2003

Message from the President

By: Doug Larsen

I found it exciting and invigorating to see the level of professionalism and enthusiasm demonstrated during our Chapter conference in April! Over 70 individuals participated in the conference and several made formal or poster presentations. It was remarkable to see the breadth and scope of wildlife studies underway by Chapter members, clearly reflecting the high level of professional leadership the Chapter is capable of assuming in conserving Alaska's wildlife. Outstanding presentations were made by Chapter members representing a number of organizations, including the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U. S. Forest Service; U. S. Geological Service; U. S. Army; Alaska Department of Fish and Game; University of Alaska, Anchorage; University of Alaska, Fairbanks; University of Alaska, Southeast; University of Idaho; Utah State University; Colorado State University; State University of New York; Audubon Alaska; and Fairwinds Wildlife Service. Formal and poster presentations focused on a wide variety of species, including black and brown bears; caribou; common goldeneyes; coyotes/hares; Dall's sheep; deer; flying squirrels; goshawks; harbor seals; harlequins; marten; moose; mountain goats; muskoxen; microtenes; Steller sea lions; wolverines; wolves; and yellow-billed loons. Other presentations addressed ungulate sexual segregation, old growth reserves, vertebrate invasive species, implications of moving permitting authority away from Fish and Game, buffer strips, managing wildlife in a climate of change, adaptive resource management, ecosystem management, and conservation strategies for the western arctic. Abstracts on these presentations can be obtained from Tom Schumacher (465-4346; tom_schumacher@fishgame.state.ak.us).

It was great to have the conference banquet well-attended. Attendees were privileged to hear a keynote address from well-known speaker and writer, Dr. Richard Nelson. Dr. Nelson's address, "Patriotism and the American Land," was both inspirational and thought provoking. During the banquet, former ADF&G Division Director, Wayne Regelin, and former USF&WS Alaska Regional Director, David Allen, were presented plaques in recognition of their many significant contributions to the conservation of Alaska's wildlife over the past many years. An added nicety was provided by the Alaska Brewing Company of Juneau, which graciously donated four cases of Winter Ale for enjoyment during the banquet and reception.

During the lunch-time business meeting, held on the first day of the conference, the Chapter took two noteworthy actions, both with unanimous approval. The first action asked that I, as president, draft letters to Governor Murkowski, House Speaker Kott, and Senate President Therriault expressing the Chapter's opposition to Executive Order 107, which transfers substantial functions of the Division of Habitat and Restoration from ADF&G to DNR. The second action was to pass a Chapter resolution supporting HB 163 and SB 122, both of which would require visitors to Alaska to purchase a \$15 Wildlife Conservation Pass prior to taking commercial tours to view wildlife. Copies of the resolution and the business meeting minutes are included in this newsletter for your information. The resolution is also posted on the Chapter's web site.

It was agreed during the business meeting to create a new "Awards" committee. Layne Adams, Matt Kirchhoff, Todd Rinaldi, and Mike Goldstein graciously volunteered to join me on this committee. The committee's first order of business will be to identify award categories, followed later with solicitation from members for deserving candidates. Other committees for which members volunteered included the **Audit Committee** (Ellen Campbell and Deb Rudis), **Conservation Review Committee** (Steve Brockman, Matt Moran, Todd Rinaldi, and John Schoen), **Education and Information Committee** (Michelle Kissling), and **Membership Committee** (Linn Shipley). Committees presently lacking volunteers include the **Nominating and Elections Committee**, **Program Committee**, and **Resolutions and Public Statements Committee**. Additional volunteers are welcomed! Please let me know if you would like to assist on a committee or with tasks and projects as they arise (465-5277; doug_larsen@fishgame.state.ak.us).

The Chapter will be hosting the 2004 NW Section meeting in Anchorage next spring, and will do so in concert with our annual Chapter meeting. We will be needing volunteers to assist with that effort. Many hands make light work, and I encourage and admonish you to step up and assist!

In closing, I would like to gratefully thank all of you who attended the April conference in Juneau and who took time to make presentations. It was great to see several students involved in the conference and I look forward to continued student involvement. I would like to congratulate Pat Valkenburg for scoring highest on the specimen contest during the conference, with 76 points. Steve Brockman was a close second with 73. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of the organizing committee: Rod Flynn, Matt Kirchhoff, Michelle Kissling, Steve Lewis, Grey Pendleton, Dave Person, Tom Schumacher, and Kevin White. The efforts of these individuals clearly made the conference and associated workshop a huge success. A sincere thanks to all!

News from the North

By Tom Paragi-Northern Representative

Public comments to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on the proposed POGO gold mine northeast of Delta Junction ended on 13 May. The underground mine would use cyanide leaching on the surface to extract gold over an estimated 11-year period. Wildlife issues are largely related to routing and public use of a 50-mile all-season mine road into previously inaccessible uplands in the Shaw Creek basin and upper Goodpaster River, which include winter range for moose and the Fortymile caribou herd.

Personnel changes—**Philip Hooe** has been selected as Assistant Superintendent and Director of the newly created Center for Resources, Science, and Learning at Denali National Park and Preserve. Dr. Hooe has been a research population ecologist with USGS at the Glacier Bay Field Station in Gustavus since 1991. **Debbie Nigro** was hired by BLM as the second wildlife biologist for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Debbie recently was a biologist with Yukon-Charley National Preserve, where she worked on songbird monitoring, and previously she had worked at Alaska Biological Research, Inc. **Patrick Valkenburg** will retire as the Interior research coordinator for ADF&G in Fairbanks after 26 years with the Department. Patrick was a caribou researcher for many years and will be organizing the upcoming International Caribou Workshop to be held in Anchorage next spring.

News from Southeast

By Doug Larsen and Ryan Scott

Legislative activity:

- HB 163 and SB 122 (wildlife conservation pass): These two bills were heard by House and Senate committees, but were not moved to the floor for a vote prior to the end of the session. Had they passed, the bills would have required visitors to Alaska to purchase a \$15 wildlife conservation pass prior to engaging in wildlife viewing activities involving commercial operators. Although not specified, the hope was that revenue obtained through this pass would go into ADF&G's fish and game account and be used to match federally-appropriated State Wildlife Grants funds (known to many as CARA).

- SB 147 (Control of nuisance wildlife): This bill passed the legislature and, if signed by the Governor, will allow ADF&G to issue permits to private entities to deal with nuisance animals. It also provides a new class of professional licenses that may be issued to commercial wildlife control companies, and enables them to be compensated for actions taken to alleviate nuisance problems. ADF&G is now developing regulatory proposals for the Board of Game to consider when implementing the legal language and authority provided by SB 147. Regulatory details include a list of species authorized for nuisance control, methods and means of control, and animal disposition and reporting requirements. Once regulations are in place, ADF&G will develop a policy for the issuance of nuisance wildlife permits. Permit conditions will specify actions to be taken when working directly with animals. The department intends to focus on the use of non-lethal methods in conjunction with mitigation efforts (e.g., removal of attractants, closing of access points) to resolve nuisance wildlife problems.
- SB 155 & HB 208 (Same-day-airborne): These two bills were merged into SB 155 and passed by the legislature. If signed into law by the Governor, the Board of Game will be given the prerogative to establish predator reduction objectives and limits, methods and means to be employed, who is authorized to participate in the program, and the conditions for participation.
- Emergency Order 107 (Transfer of permitting functions from ADF&G to DNR): This EO was issued by the Governor and, despite considerable public opposition, was upheld by the legislature. It eliminates the Division of Habitat & Restoration from ADF&G and moves the permitting functions previously administered by that division to DNR. ADF&G is currently working to develop strategies for covering the myriad of functions and tasks left at the department when H&R staff were laid off or reassigned to DNR.
- CSSB 149 (originally SB 149): This legislation will substantially modify forest practices on State forests and lands. Key elements of the latest version will change the primary purpose of State forests from multiple use to timber management, remove incompatibility determinations involving agencies other than DNR, repeal a requirement to describe the immediate and long-term effects of individual and collective forest activities on the timber base and on other resources and uses, and reduce public input to forest management planning and decisions. CSSB 149 passed the House on May 20 and is supported by the Governor. However, one House member asked for reconsideration of his vote and reconsideration was not taken up prior to the end of the session. It's unknown what procedural effect this will have on transmittal of the bill for the Governor's signature.

News from Southcentral

By Herman Griese- Southcentral Representative

No news from southcentral this time.

The Wildlife Society-Alaska Chapter 2003 Annual Business Meeting Minutes Elk's Lodge, Juneau, AK

April 9, 2003

1. Call to Order:

Doug Larsen (President) called the business meeting to order at about 12:15 PM. The meeting was held in conjunction with the two-day Alaska Chapter-TWS meeting. Pizza and soda were provided to the approximately 30 members in attendance. A quorum was established and President Larsen introduced Executive Committee members and noted that President-Elect Eric Taylor will take over as president in a year.

2. Approval of Agenda:

Members in attendance approved the agenda after adding three additional items: TWS Endowment Program, the transfer of ADF&G Habitat Division functions to DNR, and a resolution concerning HB 163 and SB 122 (Wildlife Conservation Pass).

3. May 2, 2002 Minutes:

Attending members unanimously approved the Chapter's May 2, 2002 business meeting minutes.

4. Treasurer's Report:

President Larsen and SE Representative Tom Schumacher reported on current finances of the Chapter. As of December 31, 2002, the Chapter account balance was \$7469.68. The 2003 annual meeting is expected to make approximately \$2000 in profit; the associated Resource Selection Workshop (contracted through West, Inc., Laramie, WY) broke even with 30 members in attendance (max. capacity).

5. Old Business:

2006 TWS (National) Meeting in Anchorage: The Alaska Chapter has committed to hosting the September 2006 annual meeting in Anchorage. The Executive Committee will coordinate the creation of the roughly 15 committees needed to plan and host the national meeting. Members with an interest in participating should provide phone numbers and e-mail addresses, and begin discussions about future committee responsibilities and objectives.

COWCH Program Update: Ellen Campbell provided an update on the COWCH program (Conserving our Wildlife Conservation Heritage) and information about recent interview activities with pioneer Alaskan wildlife biologists. Ellen is interested in receiving feedback about ideas for future interviews and will prepare an article to be incorporated into the next chapter newsletter about recent program activity and future goals. Also, members discussed the idea of contracting professional videographers to assist with filming and editing future COWCH video efforts. The group felt comfortable spending a bit of money to do this, but also suggested looking into the possibility of using state and federal videographers to assist.

American Fisheries Society Meeting: Members of the AK Chapter have been officially invited to attend the Annual AFS meeting in Fairbanks on November 15, 2003.

TWS Endowment Program: Wayne Regelin provided an update on the TWS Endowment Program. The program is designed to support TWS involvement in influencing national policy issues. The goal of the program is to raise \$3 million and currently about half this amount has been donated. Regelin encouraged members to consider contributing to this endowment and offered some creative ways in which individuals might make donations, such as through personal wills or investment account dividends.

6. New Business:

Committees: Chapter members decided to create a new “Awards” committee. Members Layne Adams, Todd Rinaldi, Matt Kirchhoff, and Doug Larsen agreed to participate on this committee. These members will come up with suggested award categories and will develop specific award criteria.

TWS-NW Section Meeting: The Alaska chapter will be hosting the 2004 NW Section meeting in conjunction with next year’s annual Chapter meeting, and will hold it in Anchorage. An announcement will be incorporated into an upcoming newsletter and members will be encouraged to contact (by phone) potential speakers and others with potential interest in participating in the meeting.

Transfer of ADF&G Habitat Division functions to DNR: Members unanimously supported a motion to draft letters to the Governor, Speakers of the House, and Senate President expressing the Chapter’s respectful opposition to the transfer of Habitat Division permitting authority from the Department of Fish and Game to the Department of Natural Resources. Because of the short timeline and the remote chance of influencing this policy, with its political inertia, the objective of the letters is for the AK Chapter to “go on record” in opposition of Governor Murkowski’s Executive Order #107. Members feel the transfer of permitting authority will compromise future wildlife and fish habitat conservation.

Wildlife Conservation Pass: Members unanimously supported a resolution provided by Wayne Regelin expressing support for HB 163 and SB 122. These bills would create a \$15 nonresident Wildlife Conservation Pass. The resolution asks that a major portion of the generated funds (\$3 to \$4 million of the estimated total \$7 million annual income) be used to match State Wildlife Grants funds for wildlife management, viewing, and education programs. President Larsen will send a copy of the resolution to all legislators.

7. Next Meeting:

Next year’s annual Chapter meeting will be held in conjunction with the NW Section meeting in Anchorage. The exact date has not yet been set, but should probably set it for late April or early May, 2004.

Resolution Supporting H.B. 163 and S.B. 122.

RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

A Resolution Supporting H.B. 163 and S.B. 122.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ALASKA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY:

WHEREAS Governor Murkowski has introduced legislation (H.B. 163 and S.B. 122) to raise additional revenues for fish and wildlife management programs in Alaska; and

WHEREAS this legislation would require nonresidents who use a commercial provider of an opportunity to view wildlife to purchase an annual Wildlife Conservation Pass; and

WHEREAS hunters and anglers already contribute substantially to the cost of fish and wildlife management through the purchase of licenses and tags and the payment of excise taxes; and

WHEREAS the Governor's intent is to ensure that "the cost of wildlife management is shared more broadly by those who use and enjoy our wildlife, and that the Department of Fish and Game has the resources necessary to manage Alaska's fish and wildlife resources;" and

WHEREAS the Alaska chapter of The Wildlife Society endorses these goals; and

WHEREAS the legislation calls for revenues generated from the sale of passes to go into a separate account of the General Fund, where they "may be appropriated by the legislature for the purpose of fish and wildlife management, viewing, and education programs;"

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society, that the Chapter endorses this proposed legislation, provided that a major portion of the funds are appropriated to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for the stated purposes; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that these funds should be appropriated to match federal funds provided to the Department of Fish and Game through the State Wildlife Grant Program, thus ensuring that Alaska is able to make optimal use of these funds.

Adopted this 9th day of April 2003.

Douglas N. Larsen, Chapter President

Job Announcements

(send future job announcements to Kevin White at: kevin_white@fishgame.state.ak.us)

FIELD TECHNICIAN (1) needed late May to mid-August, 2003 to assist with nesting biology studies of threatened Steller's eiders in Barrow, Alaska. Field duties include conducting surveys, monitoring nests, banding, radio tracking, and deploying video monitoring systems. This position will be filled under the Student Temporary Employment Program at a GS-04 or GS-05 level. To be eligible, applicants must be a U.S. citizen and a student enrolled at least half-time as a degree-seeking student in an accredited 2-year or 4-year college or university or graduate school, and have successfully completed at least 2 years of study that included at least 12 semester hours in biological course work. Preferred qualifications include experience with the field duties listed above. Applicants must be willing and capable of walking up to 5 miles per day on wet tundra in cold, windy weather. Transportation from Fairbanks to Barrow, food, and housing provided. For more information contact: NORA ROJEK, USFWS, Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Office, 101 12th Ave., Box 19, Room 110, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99701. (PH: 907-456-0276, FX: 907-456-0208, EM: nora_rojek@fws.gov).

2002 Membership Renewal

Current membership status is noted on the address label for this newsletter. Members interested in renewing their membership to the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society should send their membership dues to Jackie Kephart in Fairbanks. If you renew through headquarters with your national and sectional dues continue to do so. This is the easiest way for us to keep our membership files straight. Our membership list is usually updated before each newsletter is sent, so hurry to renew your membership and you will continue to receive the Alaskan Wildlifer in the future.

Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society 2003 Membership Form

If you are not a member of our National Chapter, and want to maintain your Alaska Chapter membership, please fill out the form below and return it to Jackie Kephart at the address on the front of this newsletter. If you are a member of National please continue to pay your state dues when you renew.

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Numbers-Work: _____ **Home:** _____ **Fax:** _____

E-mail: _____

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