



The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society
November 2011



Issue Highlights

- Save the Date: Alaska Chapter TWS Conference April 10-12 in Anchorage
- News, Announcements and Conferences

Message from President Kris Hundertmark

The past year has seen some events that may have a chilling effect on the conduct of wildlife science in Alaska. Two instances stand out. First, there is the ongoing investigation of Charles Monnett and Jeffrey Gleason of the US Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement (BOEMRE), formerly known as the Minerals Management Service, regarding polar bears. BOEMRE is investigating those two biologists, and although the agency claims that the investigation concerns the propriety of awarding a contract for polar bear research, advocates for the biologists from the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) provide evidence that the investigation is focused on a published note concerning the observation of floating dead polar bears in the ocean far from ice, presumably dying as a result of drowning. The implications of that observation on the climate-change debate are obvious. Because BOEMRE is not commenting publicly on the investigation it is difficult to know exactly what is going on but the position of PEER is that the government is taking issue with scientific findings that are inconvenient. In such a case, our ability to provide and act on scientific data is compromised.

We also have the instance of two Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologists being removed from the Cook Inlet Beluga Recovery Team. The team leadership removed the biologists because a new state rule requires them to adhere to and advocate for state policy rather than to serve as scientific experts. This is inconsistent with the terms of reference for the

team, which states, "... membership is based on the expertise and abilities needed to advance Cook Inlet beluga whale recovery and to achieve recovery goals." In my opinion, a recovery team is not the place to advocate policy – in this case the state's position that the Cook Inlet population of belugas is not endangered – but rather it should provide an environment for bringing together the best expertise to craft a recovery plan. The resource is the loser when recognized experts are unable to provide input to an interagency recovery effort if that input contradicts agency policy. I lament.

On a separate topic, the Executive Board recently distributed the draft of our position statement on intensive management to members. We received only 12 responses but those contained quite a diversity of opinions. Comments ranged from very positive to very negative, as you would expect for a topic that was bound to be controversial. Although some members advised us to drop the statement altogether, the Executive Board recently voted to work toward a revision of the statement that adequately address members' concerns and comments. Howard Golden is spearheading this effort and if you have comments please send them to him directly. The Board also provided comments to the national office concerning a letter that is being prepared about development of the ANWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Jerry Hupp took the lead in that effort and did a great job.

- Kris Hundertmark, President

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALASKA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Marriott Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska
April 10-12, 2012

Plan to join your colleagues from across the state for the 2012 meeting of the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society, April 10-12. The meeting will be held at the Marriott Hotel in Anchorage. Meet old friends, make new acquaintances, and learn about the latest in wildlife research and management in The Great Land.

There will be two excellent opportunities for continuing education thanks to the volunteer efforts of Chapter members. Larry Lewis will offer a one-day workshop on wildlife hazing. Participants will receive classroom instruction and field demonstrations of non-lethal techniques to deter problem animals. Liz Solomon, Todd Rinaldi, and Sally Timp will offer a workshop on cartographic design for wildlife professionals, and offer tips on how to make better maps with GIS. We will have a plenary session on ethics in wildlife conservation and management. Guest speakers John Vucetich and Michael Nelson will offer their perspectives on this important topic. Other speakers will address ethical issues surrounding a variety of resource management topics in Alaska. Also being planned are special sessions on management of wildlife that cross jurisdictional boundaries, interactions between people and wildlife, and ecology and management of Alaskan bats. If you want to learn more about the special sessions or program, contact Program Chair Grant Hilderbrand (Grant_Hilderbrand@nps.gov).

The State Chapter meeting is a great place to present your work on wildlife research, management, education, recreation, and biometrics. So, plan to contribute a paper or poster to inform your colleagues about your findings. We especially encourage students to attend at reduced registration cost, and will waive registration fees for students that present papers or posters. Students also can have their fees reduced or waived for volunteering before or during the conference. Contact Jerry Hupp (jhupp@usgs.gov) to find out how.

Look for a call for papers in January 2012. Information on registration and abstract submission will be posted on the Chapter website (<http://joomla.wildlife.org/alaska>) as the date approaches.

So save the dates and plan to attend the annual meeting in Anchorage. We look forward to seeing you there.

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



Regional News

Southcentral

By Dave Battle, Southcentral Representative

People/Careers

The Wildlife Biologist position for the Bureau of Land Management Glennallen field office is still vacant. The announcement can be found on USAJobs, or a notice of interest can be sent to Cara Staab (cstaab@blm.gov).

Geoff Beyersdorf is transferring his talents from BLM-Alaska to BLM-Montana. After four years as the Subsistence Coordinator for the Anchorage Field Office, and 16 years in Alaska's National Wildlife Refuge system, Geoff will become the Field Manager for the Lewistown Field Office. Geoff will be sorely missed for his eloquent and thoughtful approach to integrating people and science.

John Pearce is the new Chief of the Wetlands and Terrestrial Ecology Branch at the USGS Alaska Science Center. John earned his Doctorate from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 2008 and has worked as a biologist with the Alaska Science Center since 1990. John has focused on genetic research on waterfowl and in recent years, has led the center's virology research program related to avian influenza.

ADF&G News

The Alaska Dept of Fish and Game is creating a new position in Region II initially slated to work on ungulate research and predator prey dynamics. The process for creating this position is currently in the personnel department and more information will be available later. Interested biologists should monitor the Workplace Alaska website for any updated information.



Mark Burch is now serving as a Planner for Regions II and IV. ADF&G will begin recruiting for a new Region II Supervisor as soon as possible.

Todd A. Rinaldi has accepted a new position as a Wildlife Research Biologist with ADF&G based out of Palmer. His primary focus will be addressing the productivity and survival of Alaska Peninsula caribou populations in addition to other developing research and management needs.

Southeast

By Deb Rudis, Southeast Representative

No news this quarter from Southeast.

North

By Steve Arthur, Northern Representative

No news this quarter from North.



Retirement News: Dirk Derksen, USGS Alaska Science Center Branch Chief

After 30+ years of service to Alaska's wildlife, Dirk Derksen retired this fall as Chief of the Wetlands and Terrestrial Ecology Branch in the USGS Alaska Science Center. Dirk completed his doctorate at Iowa State University, and came to Alaska in 1976 to conduct research for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on molting ecology of brant and other waterfowl near Teshekpuk Lake. He worked for Migratory Bird Management at FWS through the early 80's and in 1985 became chief of the Migratory Bird Branch at the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Research Center. During his 26-year tenure as Branch Chief, Dirk shepherded his group through three agency changes from FWS to the short-lived National Biological Survey, and ultimately to USGS.



Despite agency uncertainties and fluctuating budgets, Dirk kept a focus on science and ensured his staff had the support they needed to conduct research. His leadership paid off in almost 600 peer-reviewed publications developed under his supervision. Dirk helped launch the careers of numerous young biologists, fostered interagency and international collaborations, and was renowned among his employees for shielding them from bureaucratic distractions. He helped start the Alaska Bird Conference and Copper River Delta Science Symposium, was an organizer of the 2011 International Sea Duck Conference in Seward, and in 2010 received the Pete Isleib Award for his outstanding contributions to avian conservation. Dirk's plans for retirement include completion of a book on ecology and management of sea ducks.

-Staff, Wetlands and Terrestrial Ecology Branch, USGS

TWS Officer Nominations are Open

Want to serve the Alaska State Chapter and have a greater say in its future? This is your opportunity to submit for consideration as a nominee, your name or that of a colleague to serve on the Chapter's Executive Board. In early 2012 we will hold elections to fill the positions of President-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, and three Regional Representatives. People elected to these positions serve on the Executive Board for two years (April 2012 – April 2014). The Executive Board is the governing body of the Chapter. It oversees Chapter operations and finances, and considers public comments by the Chapter on resource issues. The Regional Representatives gather news from their areas on personnel changes, agency actions, research, and resource issues for publication in the Chapter newsletter. The Secretary-Treasurer maintains the Chapters records, handles our bank account, and keeps the Board apprised of finances. The President-Elect fulfills the duties of President, if that individual is not available, and at the end of two years, becomes Chapter President. So, if you're interested in service to the Chapter, please contact Jerry Hupp (jhupp@usgs.gov). Names received will be considered by the Nominating Committee for placement on the February ballot.



Announcements

Upcoming Conferences

The Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center is hosting a workshop in Juneau February 1-3, 2012 titled "Cross-Boundary Data Integration." Additional information can be found here: http://acrc.alaska.edu/acrc_education/workshops/data_integration_II/index.html.

A conference on Coastal Temperate Rainforests will be held April 17-19 in Juneau, Alaska. Additional information can be found here: http://acrc.alaska.edu/acrc_education/Symposium/index.html.

The 4th International Human-Bear Conflicts Workshop will be held March 20-22, 2012 in Missoula, Montana. This is a professional development workshop for people who work to manage and prevent human-bear conflicts. Topics will include (1) proactive management to reduce conflicts; (2) new technology and best practices for managing bears; (3) effective community-based approaches; (4) effective communication and outreach strategies; (5) improving public messaging and approaches; and (6) risk and liability concerns. For more information, <http://www.cfc.umt.edu/humanbearconflicts/>.

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.



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at tarinaldi@yahoo.com

Help keep our members informed!
Please send notices of upcoming conferences, professional development opportunities, job postings or other news and announcements to your regional AK-TWS representative or the AK-TWS newsletter editor, elizabeth.manning@alaska.gov. Thank you!



join the **ALASKA** COASTAL RAINFOREST CENTER for a symposium

COASTAL TEMPERATE RAINFORESTS:
Integrating Science, Resource Management, and Communities
acrc.alaska.edu

**APRIL 17-19 2012
CENTENNIAL HALL
JUNEAU, ALASKA**



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.

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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 (non-voting): 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.

***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 Jan. 25, 2012 for the February 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!

