

Fall 2017



Photo courtesy EBCI

CHEROKEE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT



Photo courtesy MCPR



Photo courtesy Kelly Douglass

**Mecklenburg County
Parks & Rec**

**#OptOutside!
Robertson Millpond**

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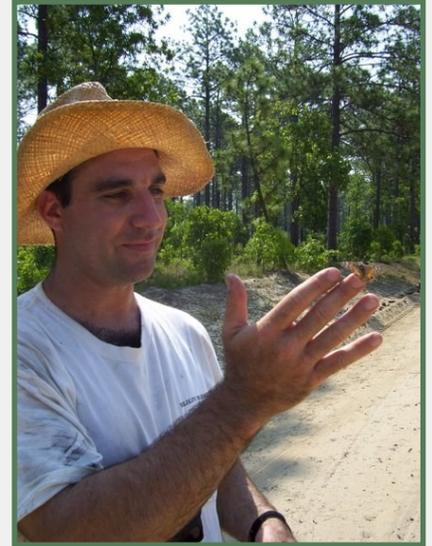
Copy Editing: Steven Ball

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Jeff's Jottings

A Moment of Appreciation

I'd like to take just a moment to express how lucky I feel to be working as a wildlife biologist in North Carolina. Many times when I am walking through a longleaf forest with a drip torch in my hand, paddling the Black River to evaluate a land protection project, or wading through a Carolina Bay to assess restoration options, I think "Am I really getting paid to do this?" For sure there are plenty more days spent at a desk scrutinizing grant proposals, cross-checking expense receipts, and answering lots and lots of emails. However drudging the office work may be at times, I am buoyed by the fact that the work that my colleagues and I are doing is making a lasting impact on the conservation of incredibly fascinating wildlife and habitats.



In North Carolina we have tremendous diversity and abundance of natural systems—from the spruce-fir mountain peaks through the longleaf flatwoods to the barrier island beaches and all in-between. Members of The Wildlife Society are playing a critical role in ensuring that beauty will remain for future generations, one landowner contact, one restoration project, one research finding, one policy initiative at a time.

We live in troubled times, and there is plenty in the news that gets me deeply discouraged. To solve the big problems of the world, we need to start at home. I feel lucky to have been entrusted with the opportunity to make a difference for wildlife and natural systems here at home, and to work in such a rewarding profession.

— Jeff Marcus

EBCI Projects



Photo courtesy EBCI

Wildlife Management on the Eastern Cherokee Lands

Josh Parris, Lead Wildlife Biologist

Caleb Hickman, Supervisory Fisheries and Wildlife Biologist

Mike LaVoie, Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Manager

In North Carolina, the modern land base of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) comprises approximately 56,000 acres within Jackson, Swain, Graham, and Cherokee Counties. However, this is less than 1% of the aboriginal extent of Cherokee lands that encompassed nearly 125,000 square miles across eight states. While EBCI lands have been considerably reduced over the past 300 years, they continue to provide Cherokee people access to a great biological diversity, driven by a combination of topographic features and water resources. These landforms result in over 200 miles of streams and diverse forest lands, with elevations ranging from 1,500 to 5,500 feet. The Fisheries and Wildlife Management Office (FWMO) manages EBCI lands for approximately 16,000 tribal members to recreate, gather plants, hunt, and

EBCI Projects



fish. Because the U.S. government protects tribally owned lands, our management responsibility extends to all Cherokee parcels that might influence natural resources.



As a young organization (est. 2007), the FWMO, housed within the Division of

Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR), mission is to sustainably manage aquatic and terrestrial species and ecosystems for the present-day Cherokee community and future generations. Currently, the Cherokee DANR has 24 full-time staff and nine interns that focus on water, air, forest, and wildlife conservation and management. Although we often access other dedicated staff for our work, our core FWMO staff and research team includes just four individuals. With all manner of organisms to study and manage, it is essential for us to engage biologists from state and federal agencies that hold in-depth expertise. However, from our broad work to preserve natural resources at the intersection of federal regulatory status and human development, we expect that our staff will become a resource for state and federal collaborators.

Some Key Projects

Black Bears

Bears are culturally important to Cherokee people—for lessons passed down from elders and as the largest source of wild meat and fur. To help continued use of bears as a resource, since 2007, we have assessed populations through harvest records and bear bait stations. On rare occasions, we also address human-bear conflicts.

Amphibians

Living within the salamander hot spot of the planet, we are inventorying all species that occur on tribal lands, which was never done comprehensively. We are using a combination of snorkeling surveys, trap arrays, and opportunistic



EBCI Projects

road, forest, and stream sampling. Hellbenders are present in EBCI streams—although we only find 1-2 per year. Other note-worthy finds include Jordan’s salamander and pigmy salamander.

Bats

With heightened federal regulations due to the federal trust status of tribal lands, we address the ESA requirements for bats through capture and acoustic monitoring. We have monitored bats since 2004, prior to the arrival of white-nose syndrome. Notable bat occurrences are Indiana bats (endangered), northern long-eared bats (threatened), and a maternity colony of eastern small-footed bats.



Photo courtesy EBCI

Birds

Cherokee is within one of North America’s major migratory bird routes. The Cherokee community relies on a high diversity of bird species for the regeneration of culturally important plants. Our projects include: breeding bird survey routes, northern saw-whet owl nest-box surveys, golden-winged warbler call-back surveys and habitat development, and MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) stations. In addition, our outreach includes a bird capture and Cherokee language bird identification for children.



Photo courtesy EBCI

EBCI Projects

Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel

Cherokee lands provide a stronghold for the federally endangered Carolina northern flying squirrel. To understand our population, in 2008 we established nest-box surveys, including 47 boxes. We plan to implement more research methods to understand densities, and restore habitat through forest release activities.

Coyotes

Coyotes are relatively new to the area and pose a significant threat when it comes to managing game species. We currently hold a bounty system mainly to collect basic biological and demographic data, as well as collect hair and stomach samples for DNA identification and diet, respectively.

Elk

With a multi-agency effort to restore elk to the mountain landscape, elk have been great for Cherokee tourism. Therefore, our program is actively managing habitat, estimating demographic numbers, and trying to understand elk needs through their local ecology. With increased elk numbers and movement onto EBCI lands, human-elk conflicts are more common, with garden damage and vehicle collisions as major issues.



Photo courtesy EBCI

Hogs

Feral hogs represent a potentially devastating problem to local ecology and cultural resources. Our program is currently working towards reducing ecosystem damage and disease transmission. We track movements via GPS and VHF collars, record damage, collect harvest samples for disease, and euthanize animals when possible.

EBCI Projects

Ruffed Grouse and Wild Turkey

Cherokee people heavily hunt turkey and grouse. Since 2012, we have worked to support harvest of game birds through annual grouse/gobbler call surveys and turkey demographic surveys. Future objectives include increased harvest records and camera-trap surveys.

White-tailed deer

In western North Carolina, white-tailed deer number less than 15 per square mile—EBCI lands may



Photo courtesy EBCI

have fewer. EBCI prohibits deer harvest due to scarcity and cultural importance. From 2014-2016, we worked with state and federal agencies to capture, GPS and VHF collar, and translocate 144 deer to EBCI lands, allowing us to monitor survival and movement. In addition, we monitor the health of native deer via collected road mortalities and opportunistic sampling.

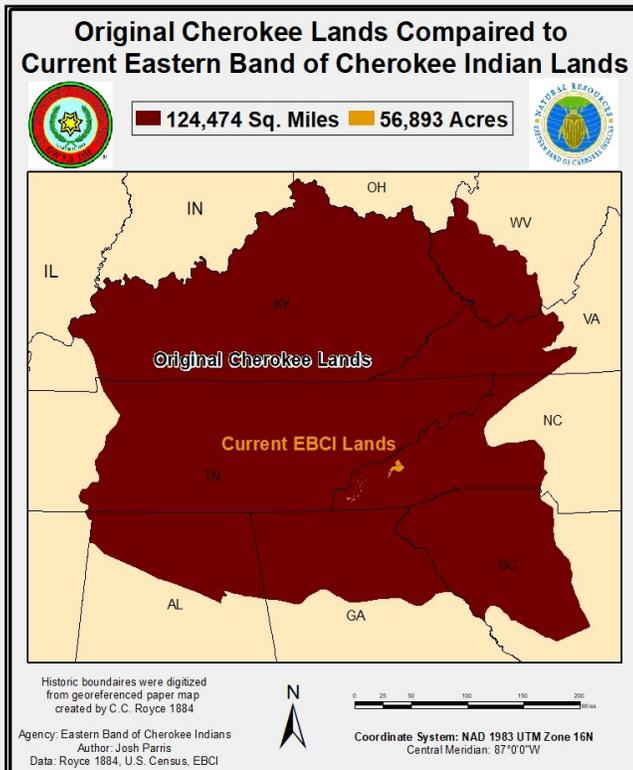


Photo courtesy EBCI

Habitat

We currently manage about 5,700 acres of forest and over 40 wildlife openings designed to benefit a diversity of species, and as of August 2017, we have a newly approved forest management plan for EBCI lands. This plan includes timber stand improvement, with consideration for wildlife and non-timber forest products, and the return of fire to the landscape.

The Tree Swallow

Written by Steven A. Ball, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services



Photo courtesy Bobby Nicks

Each winter, while driving the inactive surfaces of runways at MCAS Cherry Point, I see a few tree swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) flitting weakly about on cold but sunny days. Sometimes it's below freezing. I have always surmised they crawl into some crevice and go into semi-hibernation waiting for the weather to warm up. After all, they are insectivores. How else could they manage? After watching them for 10 winters, I undertook a little research on their life history to see what makes them tick.

Tree swallows are North America's hardiest swallow. First to migrate north in spring and last to leave their nesting grounds to fly south again in the fall, it is a resilient species, classified as an aerial insectivore. Their need for winged insects is best supplied through mosquitos and other freshwater invertebrates, although they are fond of winged ants and other terrestrial insects

The Tree Swallow

which fly during part of their life cycles.

Unlike many others in this group, they are opportunistic feeders, capable of ground feeding for insects and even plucking berries from shrubs or picking grass seeds from the ice on frozen lakes in leaner times. In the colder months during migration, bayberries (*Myrica carolinensis*) are preferred over all other berry types.



Photo courtesy Bobby Nicks

A tree swallow that reaches three years of age has done exceptionally well. It may have survived overheating in the nest as a helpless chick, the loss of a parent, periods of starvation, or hypothermia in the cold. Infanticide can occur if adult swallows are unable to drive other birds away. There are hungry predators such as snakes, insects, birds, and mammals. Ectoparasites, such as mites and feather lice, thrive in tree swallow nests and can cover the young birds by the thousands, especially second-hatch chicks growing up in a nest

cavity recently vacated by earlier fledglings. Diseases and developmental abnormalities inflict them too. Human disturbances at the nest site can cause the fledglings to leave prematurely or to be abandoned by adults. Pesticides, herbicides, and industrial pollutants can



Photo courtesy Bobby Nicks

The Tree Swallow

weaken or kill tree swallows by upsetting their metabolism.

Courtship includes the male birds showing off their flying proficiency to potential mates in dazzling flight displays alongside the airborne females. The female will weave a simple basket of grass and pine needles. Then she tucks in any feathers she can find with the quill ends down and the curved body feathers bending up and around the nest rim to cradle and warm the hatchlings when she leaves the nest for short periods to feed herself. Females are the sole incubators of the two to eight eggs. The young emerge after two weeks of incubation. Before fledging, young birds take their turns perching in the nest hole and calling out for food. Fledge time is anywhere from 16 to 24 days. The young birds fly well on their maiden flight from the nest cavity and have been observed flying for hundreds of yards before coming to rest, the adult birds flying beside them for encouragement.

Recent bird surveys indicate a decline of this species although they are found in relative abundance throughout their range. Many wildlife species are on this same downward path in numbers. In the case of the tree swallow, the bottleneck may simply be the loss of suitable nesting sites. The willingness of the tree swallow to use bluebird nest boxes provides an avenue for their continued survival. Where bluebird nest boxes are placed near a meadow



Photo courtesy Bobby Nicks

The Tree Swallow

or wetland, tree swallows have what they need to flourish. Managing for both bluebirds and tree swallows is possible if two nest boxes are placed on the same pole or in close proximity. Bluebirds are 30 percent heavier than tree swallows and are likely to win any struggle for nesting rights. A.C. Bent cites an area in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, from 1933: “With 98 wooden boxes, mostly in the open, the tree swallow population jumped in 1931 from 4 pairs to 60 pairs.” Box interiors of at least 5” x 5” are recommended to prevent hyperthermia of young in the nest. Additional preventative measures are to use pole guards to ward off mammals and grease bands below the nest box. Grease bands help keep insect invaders such as ants out of the box.



Photo courtesy Bobby Nicks

Tree swallows are beautiful and share our lives with us. It’s nice to know something more about our little friends passing through North Carolina each spring and fall.

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MCPR Wildlife Projects

Written by MCPR Staff

Mecklenburg County Moth Nights

As part of a larger effort to document the diversity of moth species found within Mecklenburg County, MCPR's Natural Resources Section conducts Moth Night events once a month from March to October. During these events, NR staff are joined by local naturalists, entomologists, and moth enthusiasts at various nature preserves and County properties, where specialized lights and baits are utilized to attract an abundance of moth species. Through photo documentation and specimen collection, NR staff have documented over 850 species of moths since 2012.

As a major food source for wildlife, including bats and neotropical migratory birds, and as important pollinators of flowering plants, moths play a significant role in the environment, both in the larval and adult stages. They can also be major pests of crops, as well as many native and ornamental trees, shrubs and plants.

Through their presence, absence or abundance, moths can be important indicators of environmental health. Having a greater knowledge and understanding of local moth diversity helps provide us with a greater knowledge of the biological resources present within the county.



Photo courtesy MCPR

MCPR Wildlife Projects



Bat Monitoring

Natural Resources Staff have been recording bat call data from locations across the county for the past year. Since August 2016, we have conducted 39 surveys at 26 different sites. These surveys are consistent with the North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat) stationary survey protocols, and lasted either four or eight night durations. We have focused on locations on Nature Preserve properties, but have also been lucky enough to partner with other landowners in the county. Overall, we have identified calls from at least eight different bat species, with the possibility of other species being found as well with the help of auto-identification software. Our ability to gather data from a variety of locations (urban or forested) allows us to capture many different species. We began our monitoring after Dr. Han Li from UNC-Greensboro came and acoustically monitored two locations on Nature Preserves. We will continue to monitor, and hope to add to our growing list of species found in the county.

MCPR Wildlife Projects

Prescribed Fire

Like many other land managers, MCPR values the use of prescribed fire. Our group burns about 500 acres during a 10-day period each year. Smoke management is our number one challenge due to population density and historic air quality issues. Every burn is urban interface. This forces us to keep units relatively small and do lots of outreach. We use a targeted Reverse-911 system (Everbridge) that lets us contact thousands of downwind residents immediately before each burn. We also maintain close contact with county Air Quality and our county Fire Marshal – they issue our permits. Despite the obstacles, we have maintained a burn program in the department for 20+ years and continue to build capacity. A few highlights about our program:



Photo courtesy MCPR

Piedmont Prairie Restoration is our highest priority for burning. These are early successional areas with a focus on native warm season grasses and appropriate forbs including *Helianthus schweinitzii* (federally endangered) and *Symphotrichum georgianum* (state threatened). These units are on a roughly 18 month interval – our oldest is a 40-acre block at Latta Plantation Nature Preserve that has been burned 14 times since 2001. We also focus on “savannah” type blocks adjacent to these more open grassland blocks.

M CPR Wildlife Projects

Demonstration Units are our second priority. We began doing these fairly recently, but believe these ½-acre blocks are key to the long term success of our program. Small roadside units near our nature centers, some within the City of Charlotte, are key to outreach efforts and public education.



Photo courtesy M CPR

Invasive Species Management (Autumn Olive): We have nearly completed a 6-year FFI study on the effects of burning on *Elaeagnus umbellata*. After three burn cycles on our test plots, we know that fire doesn't eliminate the pest but it does seriously knock it back. A good burn top kills most of the olive, making chemical treatment much more feasible.

Wildlife Surveys in Thinned Loblolly Pine Stand

M CPR's Natural Resources Section has recently coordinated timber harvests within the nature preserves to remove some existing loblolly pine plantations and allow for the re-established of natural communities. Some areas have been clear-cut, with shortleaf pine and hardwoods planted or seeded in to help accelerate the process. In areas where erosion and other issues might occur as a result of clearing, selective thinning serves as a better option.

MCPR Wildlife Projects

In an effort to determine if/how the selective thinning efforts affects the wildlife diversity in these areas, NR staff are conduct-



Photo courtesy MCPR

ing a three-year study on a site that has been selectively thinned in Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge. The first year of data was collected before the trees were harvested and an additional two years of data will be collected post-harvest.

The data is being collected each fall through various wildlife surveys, including point counts for birds, live trapping of small mammals and inventories of target insect groups (orders Lepidoptera and Odonata). In the first round of post-harvest surveys, a significant increase in wildlife abundance and diversity was already being observed.



Photo courtesy MCPR

M CPR Wildlife Projects

Grassland Conversion

Since 1995, M CPR has been restoring Piedmont Prairies and converting hayfields to warm season native grasses. Many of these areas were dominated by fescue, orchard grass, and Johnson grass. Most of these sites are now established and are being maintained with fire. Currently, we are converting several recently acquired properties from fescue hayfields to more natural areas. The process begins by removing undesirable vegetation with an herbicide application and following up to control invasive vegetation. In some areas, native grasses and wildflowers (Piedmont ecotype) are drilled in to speed up the process and gain public acceptance and support. Some of our neighbors really like a mowed field, so some showy wildflower areas help them to accept the more natural look and allow us to educate about the importance of native vegetation while the other plants are becoming established.

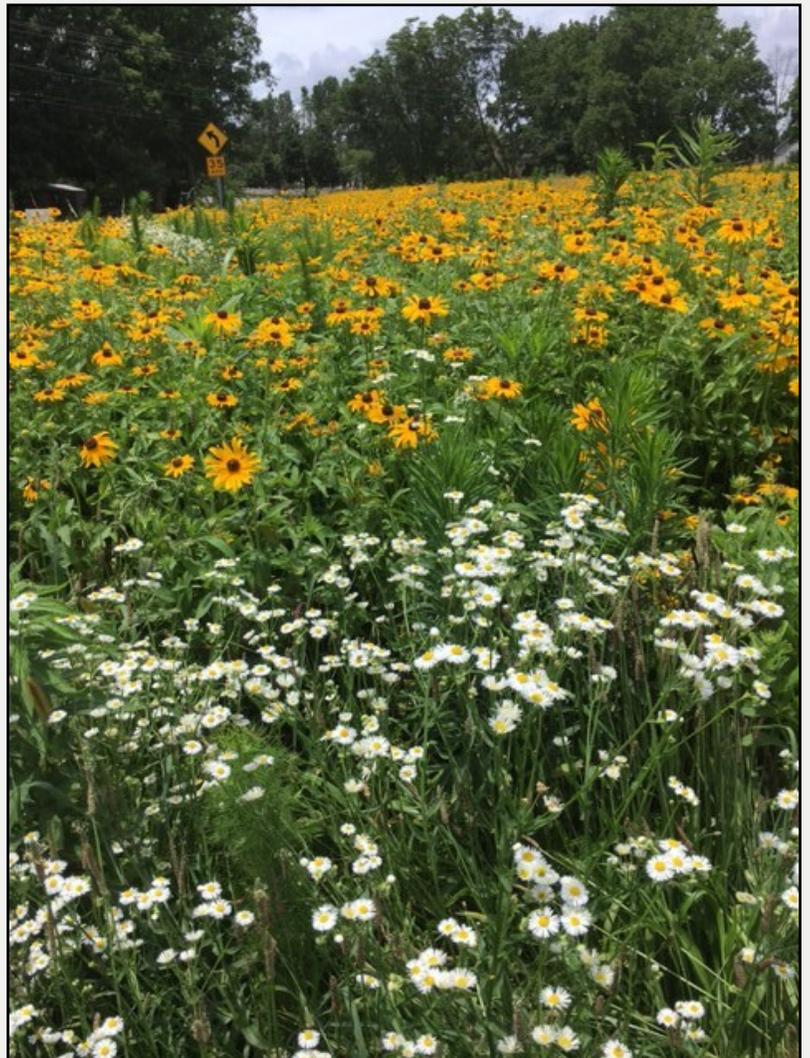


Photo courtesy M CPR

Professional Development

NCWRC Grassland Bird Surveys

Written by: Kacy Cook, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, NCTWS At-large Board Member

Ever wondered how to pick out the call or song of an eastern kingbird or an orchard oriole? Kacy Cook can get you up to speed on your grassland birds in just a handful of mornings as she runs her routes for the NC Wildlife Commission. Last June, NCTWS member Sharon Wilson and staff from the Catawba Lands Conservancy took advantage of this new professional development opportunity and rode along on one of three ‘mini breeding bird survey’ routes in Stanly, Cabarrus, and Rowan Counties. NCWRC set up these surveys in 2008 to track changes in grassland bird occupancy in agricultural landscapes, which dominate the southern Piedmont, to inform the NC Wildlife Action Plan. During these mini-BBS surveys, NCWRC biologists focus on recording only the following priority bird species: grasshopper sparrow, loggerhead shrike, bobwhite quail, eastern kingbird, orchard oriole, blue grosbeak, field sparrow, American kestrel, yellow-breasted chat, red-winged blackbird, and prairie warbler.



Photo courtesy Kacy Cook

Professional Development



Before sunrise it was almost impossible to point out anything except for the cacophony of mockingbirds. Two hours later, though, Sharon Wilson was getting the hang of the songs of eastern meadowlarks and grasshopper sparrows. The Catawba Lands Conservancy plans to use the experience to improve their grassland bird song ID and to collect data on the species using their conservation lands and easements. There have been 81 survey occasions and only six records of loggerhead shrikes. A very interesting find in this year's surveys came while surveying for loggerhead shrikes in early May; a male bobolink was observed singing in Rowan County!



Photo courtesy Kacy Cook

Save the Date!

NCTWS Annual Meeting 2018

February 27—March 1, 2018

Haw River State Park

Browns Summit, NC



Photo courtesy Friends of State Parks, Inc.

Please join your fellow wildlife biologists in Browns Summit, NC for the 2018 Annual Meeting of NCTWS at Haw River State Park February 27—March 1, 2018. Sessions will focus on wildlife professionalism in the digital age. Plans include hands-on-tech training opportunities, presentations on emerging research, and conversations about public engagement. Mark your calendar now and look forward to an informative and motivating conference capped by our traditional lively auction and bluegrass session!

2018 Annual Meeting

Get Your Raffle Tickets!

The NC Chapter of The Wildlife Society will once again raffle off four exciting expedition trips during the 2018 NCTWS Annual Meeting.

See the trip descriptions below!

Just print off your tickets, fill them out, and bring them (or send them with a friend) to the annual meeting along with your donation. Cash and checks, made payable to NCTWS, will be accepted for tickets sold outside of the annual meeting. Cash, checks, and credit cards will be accepted for tickets sold on-site at the annual meeting.

Ticket prices:

1 ticket for \$5

3 tickets for \$10

8 tickets for \$20

You do not need to be present at the annual meeting to win, and you do not have to be a member of NCTWS to purchase tickets. So ask your neighbors, friends, or anyone else you think might be interested in one of these amazing experiences to buy some tickets today!

The drawing will be held during the evening social on February 28, 2018. Winners not present will be contacted the following day.

The NCTWS member who sells the most tickets between now and the annual meeting will win a prize!

2018 Annual Meeting



Raffle #1:

Crabbing/Fishing Trip at Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge:

Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge lies in the wilds of Hyde County, North Carolina. Refuge Manager Pete Campbell will be your guide on a two-day trip to fish and crab in and around Lake Mattamuskeet. While it is historically renowned as a premier location for

both waterfowl viewing and duck hunting, people travel from many states to Mattamuskeet to fish and crab, especially during the spring and fall months. The refuge boasts some of the biggest blue crabs that can be found in North Carolina. All you need is a NC inland fishing license to enjoy the truly unique experience of hand lining for crabs in our canals as well as fishing for a variety of freshwater fish. This expedition includes one night's lodging and meals at the Campbell residence on the refuge and everything you need to hand line for crabs. During your visit you can also enjoy other activities such as birding and nature walks, so this trip is truly multi-faceted in nature!

Raffle #2:

Catfish Grabblin' Expedition on the Pee Dee River:

Join Lincoln Sadler and Terry Sharpe, retired NCWRC employees, for a truly unique fishing experience grabblin' (a.k.a. noodling, hand-fishing) for giant catfish on the Pee Dee

River. This guided trip includes a scenic walk on Pee Dee game land, a swim in the Pee Dee River, and a chance to test your fortitude by sticking your hand into an underwater crevice and pulling out a 60 lb fish. Truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Trip dependent on favorable water levels.

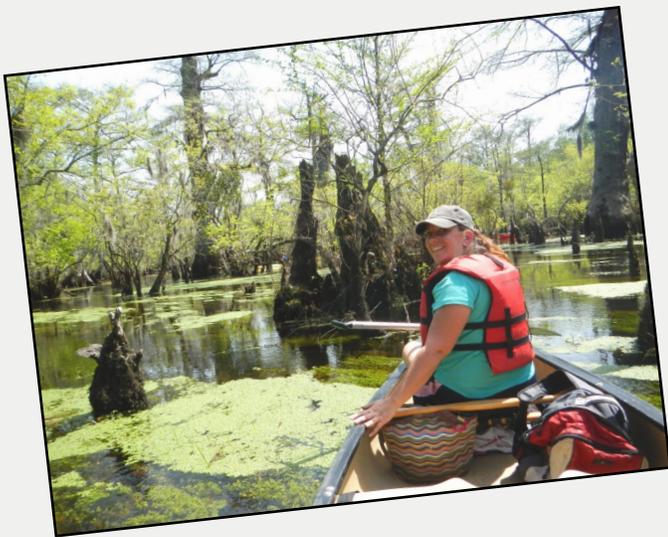


2018 Annual Meeting

Raffle #3:

Elevational Bird Watching

Expedition: Join Kendrick Weeks, Mountain Wildlife Diversity Supervisor with the NCWRC, to learn how bird communities in the mountains change with elevation. This trip for up to 4 people in May or June will visit various habitats at different elevations with opportunities to see (or hear) birds such as Blackburnian warblers, black-throated blue warblers, chestnut-sided warblers, and golden-winged warblers.



Raffle #4

Black River Paddle Trip: Join Jerry Reynolds, Head of Outreach for the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, and other Museum staff on a spectacular paddle on the beautiful Black River which flows by some of the oldest living trees in the eastern United States. Ancient Bald Cypress Trees are found along this black water river--some are over 1700 years

old! It involves an 11 mile, easy to moderate paddle on slow-moving water, about 6 hours on the water. Trip for 1, transportation from Raleigh and canoe rental included (value \$80). Participant provides own lunch. Trip for additional people can be purchased as space allows. Trip will take place on a weekend, sometime in late March or early April (date will be set by Jerry). If winner is unable to make the trip in 2018, they can opt to use their winning ticket in 2019.

2018 Annual Meeting

Use the raffle tickets below to print off your tickets to sell! Don't forget, the NCTWS member who sells the most tickets between now and the annual meeting will win a prize!

<p>Name: _____ Phone: _____</p> <p>The Wildlife Society - NC Chapter 2018 Expedition Mountain Birding Trip</p> <p>Name of ticket seller: _____</p>	<p>North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society 2018 Expedition Trip Raffle</p> <p>Elevational Mountain Birding Trip with Kendrick Weeks</p> <p>Drawing held February 28, 2018 <i>Donation 1 ticket for \$5, 3 for \$10, 8 for \$20</i></p> <p>See Expedition Descriptions sheet for further details. Dates to be arranged between winner and expedition coordinator.</p>
<p>Name: _____ Phone: _____</p> <p>The Wildlife Society - NC Chapter 2018 Expedition Crabbing/Fishing Trip</p> <p>Name of ticket seller: _____</p>	<p>North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society 2018 Expedition Trip Raffle</p> <p>Blue Crab Hand-line & Fishing on Lake Mattamuskeet</p> <p>Drawing held February 28, 2018 <i>Donation 1 ticket for \$5, 3 for \$10, 8 for \$20</i></p> <p>See Expedition Descriptions sheet for further details. Dates to be arranged between winner and expedition coordinator.</p>
<p>Name: _____ Phone: _____</p> <p>The Wildlife Society - NC Chapter 2018 Expedition Pee Dee Catfish Trip</p> <p>Name of ticket seller: _____</p>	<p>North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society 2018 Expedition Trip Raffle</p> <p>Hand-fishing for Giant Catfish on the Pee Dee River</p> <p>Drawing held February 28, 2018 <i>Donation 1 ticket for \$5, 3 for \$10, 8 for \$20</i></p> <p>See Expedition Descriptions sheet for further details. Dates to be arranged between winner and expedition coordinator.</p>
<p>Name: _____ Phone: _____</p> <p>The Wildlife Society - NC Chapter 2018 Expedition Black River Trip</p> <p>Name of ticket seller: _____</p>	<p>North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society 2018 Expedition Trip Raffle</p> <p>Day Long Canoe Trip on the Black River Trip held late March or early April</p> <p>Drawing held February 28, 2018 <i>Donation 1 ticket for \$5, 3 for \$10, 8 for \$20</i></p> <p>See Expedition Descriptions sheet for further details. Dates to be arranged between winner and expedition coordinator.</p>

Call for Nominations

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY RECOGNITION AWARDS FOR 2018

SOLICITATION REMINDER

The NCTWS recognizes and honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the field of wildlife conservation in the broadest sense. Each year at the annual meeting, several awards are presented to deserving individuals. Nominations for awards to be presented at the annual meeting must be received by the Awards Committee Chairman ***no later than December 1, 2017***. All Chapter members are encouraged to consider and nominate deserving candidates for these awards. Previously unselected nominees can be re-submitted. Nominations are kept active for two years after the year in which a nomination is made. The only way to recognize individuals is to nominate them.

Contact Dr. Chris DePerno, Awards Committee Chair (NCSU, Turner House, Box 7646, Raleigh, NC 27695, 919-513-7559, chris_deperno@ncsu.edu) if you have questions, need additional information, or to submit a nomination. Consult the Chapter website (<http://www.nctws.org>) for general information about our Chapter, previous award winners, award descriptions, and nomination forms.

#OptOutside

Robertson Millpond Preserve

By Kelly Douglass

To those who are familiar with the Millpond, it is one of the most unique and interesting refuges for wildlife in the Triangle. But for those who are unfamiliar, let me acquaint you!

Robertson Millpond Preserve is an 85-acre refuge located in Wendell, North Carolina at the headwaters of Buffalo Creek. It is the only bald cypress blackwater swamp in Wake County, a habitat that is quite rare that far north and west in North Carolina. The millpond supports a variety of coastal plain species not usually found in the piedmont, including fetterbush, sweetspire,



Photo courtesy Kelly Douglass

anhingas, and cottonmouths, and is a haven for over 160 other species of wildlife. The water appears black as night from the tannins that leach into the water from decaying leaves, and the current moves so slowly that the pond itself is smooth as

#OptOutside

glass. Swamp rose and other plants cling to the base of bald cypress trees, while prothonotary warblers flick around the swamp looking for their next meal. If you visit in the springtime, you may also hear the loud squawks coming from the great blue heron rookery in the center of the swamp.

The preserve was purchased by the Wake County Open Space Program in September 2013 and was opened to the public in October 2015. It was featured as a “Wetland Treasure of the Carolinas” in 2017 by the Carolina Wetlands Association, and is one of 47 Significant Natural Heritage Areas in Wake County (designated in 1983). Although the preserve has only been open to the public for two years, it has quite a history



Swamp rose. Photo courtesy Kelly Douglass.

with the locals.

So the story goes: Back in the 1820s, William Avera and his wife and two children lived on the property, operating a 600-acre farm that also included the grist mill. Buffalo Creek was impounded using a part earthen, part masonry dam to power the mill. Sometime over the following decades,



Prothonotary warbler. Photo courtesy Kelly Douglass.

#OptOutside



William's son Thomas became a farmer and doctor, subsequently serving as a surgeon for the Confederate Army during the Civil War, and, after the war, moved the family home to Robertson Pond Road sometime in the 1870s. Land sales occurring between 1887-1914 led to the Robertson family ownership of the millpond. The Roberston family continued operations of the mill until around the 1940s or 1950s. Fishing was very popular in the 1940s, and the millpond was a local hotspot for catching crappie, bluegill, and largemouth bass. In 1960, Charles Robertson divided the estate into 11 tracts for his heirs, leaving the portion containing the millpond to Nettie Roberston Fowler. Her family continued to allow access to the pond in the 1960s, and even rented out wooden boats from

#OptOutside

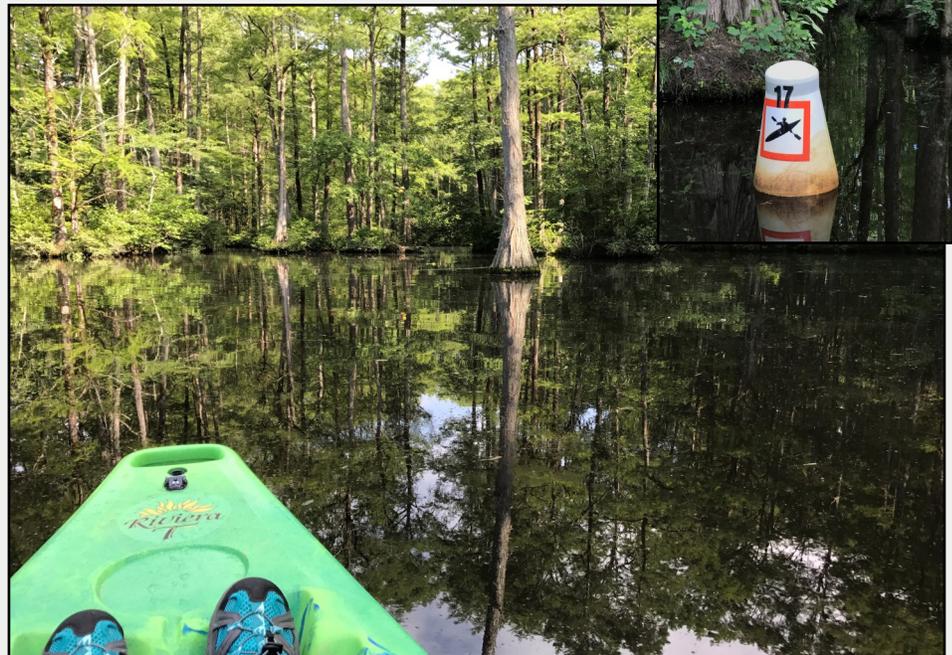


Bald cypress. Photo courtesy Kelly Douglass.

their boathouse so locals could enjoy the fishing. The mill apparently fell out of use in the 1950s, and was removed in 1975. So for almost two centuries, the millpond served as a significant gathering location and economic boon for the Wendell community [historical information provided by Wake County].

Although the mill house has been removed, you can still see the dam, mill foundation, and original millstone today. Over the last few decades, the pond has turned into a forested wetland, roughly 8-12 feet deep, with bald cypress trees dominating the site. Folks who visit the millpond today use it for

wildlife viewing, canoeing, geocaching, kayaking, picnicking, and of course, fishing. Wake County has installed 73 buoys, arranged in a 1.15-mile paddle loop trail beginning and ending at the boat launching area. Be sure to keep those buoys in sight, though, because it's easy to get lost amongst the towering cypress trees!



Kayaking trail. Photo courtesy Kelly Douglass.

#OptOutside

The site has also been studied for many years by Dr. Eugene Hester, former director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and NC State University students who are interested in wood ducks and prothonotary warblers. Paddling the trail, you will see dozens of what appear to be old Metamucil cans, turned into cozy little warbler houses alongside the larger, wooden wood duck boxes!



Prothonotary warbler nest box. Photo courtesy Kelly Douglass.

There are no facilities (restroom, bug spray, drinking water, etc.) on-site yet, so if you stay at



Bald cypress leaves—up close and personal! Photo courtesy Kelly Douglass.

the millpond for a while, you'll want to be prepared. But if you don't have a boat, don't worry! You can rent a kayak now from Paddle Creek, a local outfitter who started bringing a supply of solo and tandem kayaks to the pond every Saturday from 9am-5pm from mid-April until October. Boat rentals are first come, first served on-site, but can also be reserved ahead of time on their website: <https://paddlecreeknc.com/>.

#OptOutside

Robertson Millpond Preserve is open Saturdays and Sundays from 8am-sunset year-round, and for a handful of holidays. Only 25 minutes from downtown Raleigh, the pond is a great location for a weekend trip and a wonderful place to **#OptOutside!**



The millpond. Photo courtesy Kelly Douglass.

Other News

NCTWS Becomes an Affiliate of NCWF

The NCTWS Board recently approved that our organization become an affiliate member of the NC Wildlife Federation (NCWF). This will increase communication and collaboration between our sister organizations. In particular, NCWF hopes to benefit from our scientific expertise, while NCTWS will benefit from their policy expertise and infrastructure. Becoming an affiliate does not automatically mean NCTWS endorsement of NCWF policy positions. It does, however, create new opportunities for information sharing and other synergies.



Cardinal Foundation Returns Safeguarded Funds

NCTWS recently learned that we have \$5,900 that has been sitting in an account with the Cardinal Foundation. The Cardinal Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) corporation established in cooperation with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission in 1995 to provide a fundraising entity for nongame wildlife and habitat conservation efforts in North Carolina. No one recalls the original purpose of the \$5,900, but because the Cardinal Foundation is now disbanding, the money will be returned to NCTWS. The NCTWS Board is currently studying alternatives for using proceeds from the 2016 TWS conference to benefit members, and the \$5,900 will be added to those funds to further benefit NCTWS members.

Other News

Conservation Award Winner!



Chapter Member Jeff Hall Wins Conservation Award

Jeff Hall was recently awarded the 54th Governor's Conservation Achievement Award for Wildlife Conservationist of the Year. Jeff's work on coastal herpetofauna has focused on ephemeral wetlands and state endangered species such as the eastern diamondback rattlesnake. As a North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission employee, Jeff works with a variety of entities and organizations to help recover or restore herpetological fauna in the state. His passion for conserving wildlife for future generations is evident in his body of work and the acknowledgement this award represents.

Congratulations, Jeff!



Other News

It's All About the Impact!

TWS Journals Deliver Science-Based Wildlife Management and Conservation to a Broad Audience

By Nancy Sasavage



Nancy Sasavage, Director of Publications and Communications for The Wildlife Society and the editor-in-chief of *The Wildlife Professional*

At the beginning of 2017, The Wildlife Society made a major commitment to increasing the impact of the Society's peer-reviewed publications: online access to TWS' three journals for all members — from students to retirees — became our newest membership benefit. This means that you can read all the latest papers in each issue of *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, the *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, and *Wildlife Monographs* on *any* internet-connected device, *anywhere*, at *any* time. Plus

you have access to the complete archives of these journals as part of your TWS membership.

This new benefit, worth \$75 and nearly the cost of an \$81 full membership, reinforces TWS' mission to inspire, empower and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation. It also means that *everything* TWS publishes, which includes *The Wildlife Professional* and Technical Reviews, is free to all members.

Higher Impact in 2016

Of course, a journal's impact is also measured by its impact factor. Love them or hate them, impact factors have a large, but controversial, influence on the way published scientific research is perceived and evaluated.

We were pleased to learn that the impact factors for each of TWS' three journals increased in 2016. The Thomson Reuters' impact factor ranking system is based on the number of times an average article is cited during the previous two years.

Other News

The *Journal of Wildlife Management's* 2016 impact factor was 1.897, up from 1.725, *Wildlife Monographs's* was 5.750, up from 5.125, and the *Wildlife Society Bulletin's* was 0.967, up from 0.781. This good news is truly a testament to the leadership of each journal. Paul Krausman serves as editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Wildlife Management*, Dave Haukos is the *Bulletin's* editor-in-chief and Eric Hellgren, who recently stepped down, served as editor-in-chief of *Wildlife Monographs* for 10 years. Merav Ben-David was selected to replace him earlier this year.

Planning for Future Impact

The impact factor increases are an important milestone in TWS' 2015 – 2019 strategic plan, which includes themes of being an organization recognized for expertise in science-based wildlife management and conservation and supporting, encouraging, and enabling members to conserve and manage wildlife through the application of science. You may also recall that earlier this year, you received an invitation to participate in a survey conducted by the Publications Subcommittee chaired by Mike Conner. We were pleased that nearly 900 members participated in the survey, as well as 79 individuals who are not members, but have published in a TWS journal. The results, which are now being analyzed, will help inform the next steps we can take to improve our journals and attract more submissions. Speaking of submissions, member interested in submitting papers to TWS' journals, can easily access the recently updated unified [author guidelines](#) to find out more. We want to encourage all members to submit papers to our journals.

More Readers Equals More Impact

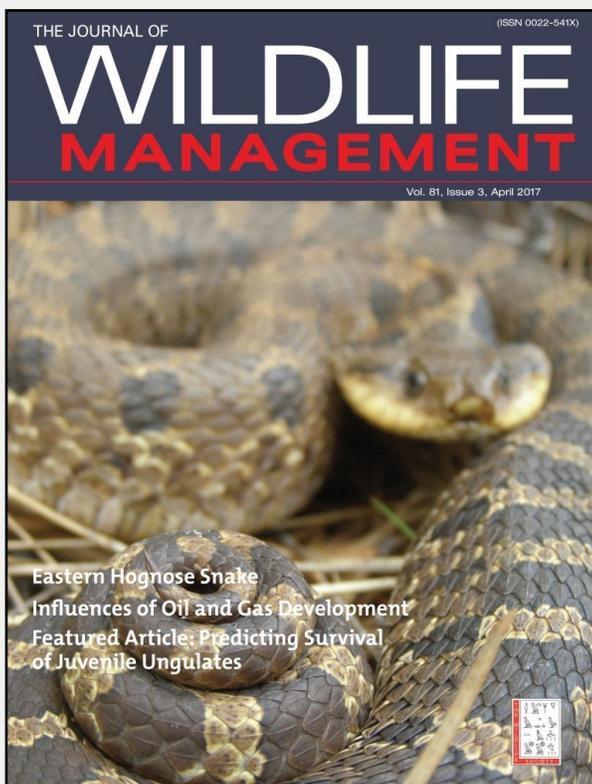
Without a doubt, the impact of TWS' journals is growing! In 2017, when online journal access became a TWS membership benefit, we greatly expanded the number of members who can regularly read each issue. In addition, last year the number of subscribing institutions grew by 25 percent for *Journal of Wildlife Management* to 4,251 worldwide and nearly tripled for the *Wildlife Society Bulletin* to 1,503. This means wildlife biologists nearly everywhere have access to and potentially can read our

Other News

journals. By more widely disseminating research on wildlife management and conservation that is scientifically based, TWS is working to have a positive impact on the sustainability of wildlife populations for future generations. As always, watch for announcements about TWS' journals on www.wildlife.org and in the weekly *eWildlifer*.

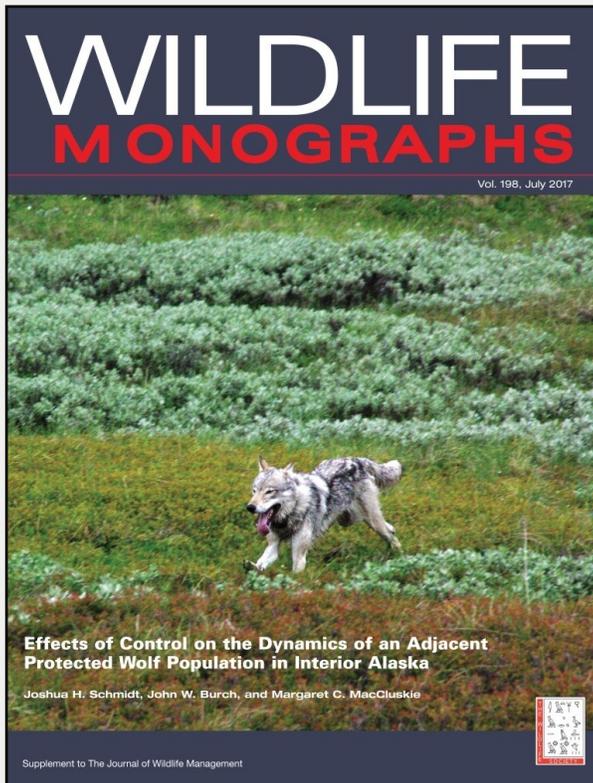
How to Access TWS Journals

To view the journals in the Wiley Online Library, simply [login](#) to the TWS website. Under the "Publications" tab, you will find the list of journals. Click on the one you want to view, which will take you directly to that journal's landing page on the Wiley website. You can also [sign up](#) for automated delivery of the table of contents so that you are notified when each new issue is posted. This service is not part of your membership, so you must register on the Wiley website. Free apps for the TWS' journals are available for both Apple and Android users. Go to the app store and search for the name of the journal to download the app. To access the content, you will need to enter your TWS user name and password.



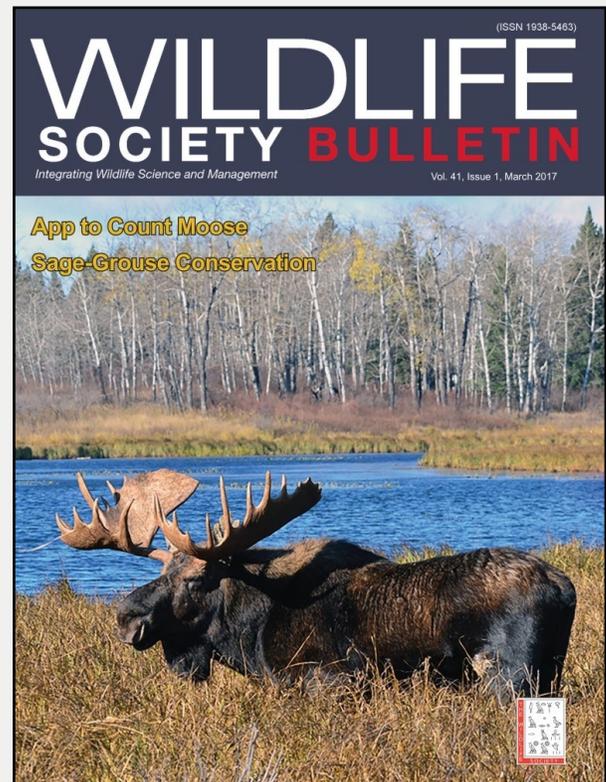
The Journal of Wildlife Management, published since 1937, is one of the world's leading scientific journals covering wildlife science, management and conservation. Published eight times per year, Editor-in-chief Paul R. Krausman emphasizes that the journal publishes papers focusing on aspects of wildlife that can assist management and conservation by providing life-history data, modeling, new analytical and quantitative approaches, theory, and new approaches to understand human dimensions.

Other News



Wildlife Monographs, published since 1958, are single-topic, peer-reviewed studies on specific problems and issues in wildlife science, management and conservation. After 10 years, Editor-in-chief Eric Hellgren stepped down early this year. He was replaced by Merav Ben-David.

Editor-in-chief David Haukos says the *Wildlife Society Bulletin* focuses on manuscripts that directly assist with on-the-ground management and conservation. The Bulletin got its start in 1973. After a brief hiatus, it was re-launched as an online-only journal in 2011. This peer-reviewed publication, published four times per year, contains papers related to wildlife management, law enforcement, education, economics, administration, ethics and more.



NCTWS Member Spotlight



This is my family and me in Kentucky, December 2013. This was the 2nd cat we processed that day and the 2nd of the season. My family was able to come and help us and we had a great time. Left to right is Melody (4 then, 8 now), Tiffany, Charlie, Amanda (almost 6 then, 10 now). Photo courtesy Charles Sanders.

Name: Charles W. Sanders II

What you're called: Charles, Charlie

Current Position: Research Assistant, NC State University, Raleigh

How long have you been with this employer?

August 2015

Phone number and/or e-mail: (919) 896-9519, cwsander@ncsu.edu

Education:

Aug 2015-Present Candidate, M.S. Fisheries, Wildlife, & Conservation Biology, NC State University

Aug 2009-May 2013 B.S. Fisheries, Wildlife, & Conservation Biology, NC State University

Where did you grow up? Hampstead, Pender County, NC

What other work experience do you have?

May 2014-Sep 2015 Black Bear & Furbearer Technician, NC Wildlife Resources Commission

NCTWS Member Spotlight

May 2013-Apr 2014 Bobcat Technician, KY Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Sep 2009-May 2013 Undergrad Research Volunteer, NC State

Why did you go into a wildlife career? My father worked as a wildlife technician at Holly Shelter gamelands and taught me to not only love hunting, fishing, and trapping, but to appreciate all the work and science that goes into having these resources available. The science behind it all has always fascinated me, and I believe that I can be a real asset in the management of our wildlife resources.

Have you always been interested in wildlife? I inherited a love and appreciation of wildlife and nature in general from my dad, and that has blossomed over time. The more I learn the more fascinated I am.

What has been your most fulfilling experience with TWS? It had to be working with such wonderful people in the Leopold Wildlife Club my last two years of undergrad. Being able to work with a group of students and never worry about something not getting done was a wonderful testament to me of the quality of young people entering this field.

Who has been an influence on you in your career? How and why? There have been four main influences in my career so far. I already talked about my dad.

My wife, Tiffany, has pushed, encouraged, and supported me even when it meant great sacrifices on her part.

Colleen Olfenbuttel has been there to help, guide, support, and chastise me every step of my professional journey. I would never have accomplished what I have without her support and guidance.

NCTWS Member Spotlight

Dr. Chris DePerno has also been there to help, guide, support, and chastise. He has been a particular help during my studies, both undergraduate and graduate. Without his support my research never would have happened, and I would not be finishing up my Master's degree right now.

Both Chris and Colleen have endured endless editing sessions of proposal and chapter drafts from me.

What advice would you give someone just starting out in wildlife?

Experience > Grades. Maintain good grades, but get out in the field and get actual working experience. There is no substitute for that. There's only so much you can learn from a book or lecture. Go get your hands dirty. At the same time, don't be afraid to talk to people. Wildlife management is a small world. You'd be surprised at how many good things can happen from just a couple of good contacts.

What would your fellow biologists be surprised to learn about you?

I spent 2 years in Atlantic Canada and northern Maine as a LDS Missionary.

What song, quote, or movie title sums up your life philosophy?

"A conservationist is one who is humbly aware that with each stroke [of the axe] he is writing his signature on the face of the land." Aldo Leopold



NCTW'S Member Spotlight



Photo courtesy Liz Rutledge

Name Elizabeth Rutledge

What you're called: Liz

Current Position: Wildlife Specialist, NC Wildlife Federation, Raleigh, NC

How long have you been with this employer? 3 years

Phone number and/or e-mail:
(919) 833-1923; liz@ncwf.org

Education:

- 2013 Ph.D. in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology, NCSU
- 2007 M.S. in Natural Resources, NCSU
- 2004 B.S. in Biology, Wingate University

Where did you grow up? Banner Elk, NC

What other work experience do you have?

- 2011-2012 Lake Mattamuskeet NWR Late Waterfowl Season Coordinator
- 2004 USGS Intern working with an endangered bird species in Hawaii
- 1997-2003 Grandfather Mountain Nature Museum

NCTWS Member Spotlight

Why did you go into a wildlife career? I grew up in a family with strong ties to land, wildlife, and the environment which becomes ingrained in your everyday life. This type of work chooses you because when you're passionate about something, you know you wouldn't be happy doing anything else.

Have you always been interested in wildlife? I've always had a strong love for environmental work and the outdoors, including wildlife.

Who has been an influence on you in your career? How and why? My family has greatly influenced my career. I grew up on a farm in the mountains of North Carolina and when I was young, we grew vegetables, raised farm animals, fished, made jellies, cooked applesauce, and carried firewood in for the stoves. I was raised around values where you respected the land you depended on and you reused as opposed to replaced. I like to think my grandparents were conservationists without knowing they had a label. For me, those values and experiences have continued to influence my career choices and decisions in life.

Also, I had an advisor in graduate school who taught me to persevere and think about 'progress, not perfection'. This professor encouraged me to keep moving forward at times when it seemed my research, statistics, and dissertation and publication revisions would never end. He taught me to be confident in my abilities and saw a career path for me when others did not. He was a true mentor every step of the way and I would not be where I am today without his guidance and support.

What has been the highlight of your wildlife career so far? The highlight of my career has been obtaining a full time job that allows me to be involved in all aspects of wildlife and environmental issues. It's been rewarding to have a position that allows flexibility between office and field work while providing experiences in wildlife policy and science, public

NCTWS Member Spotlight

outreach, and collaborative efforts between agencies.

What advice would you give someone just starting out in wildlife?

Work in an environment where your talents are needed, appreciated, and where you believe you can make a difference. Also, take time to network with experienced individuals in environmental/wildlife fields and learn something new each time. Get involved locally and be cognizant of issues affecting the land, air, water, and wildlife around you.

Where is the most interesting place you have traveled?

I spent time in Israel, mostly Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, but I also traveled to Bethlehem and the Dead Sea.

What would your fellow biologists be surprised to learn about you?

I love the arts and lived in London so I could study British art, literature, architecture, and theatre.

What was your most thrilling hunting or fishing experience?

My most memorable hunting experience was harvesting my first Canada goose in Hyde County. It was warm, everything was still, and the moon still in the sky as the birds came into the decoys.

NCTWS ANNOUNCEMENTS



Photo courtesy TWS

Did you know you can check your membership status on-line, including when your member expires in 3 easy steps!

1. Go to nctws.org and click "Members"
2. Sign in with the password
3. Then click "NCTWS Members Directory"

Did you forget the password? It gives you access to the directory and much more!

E-mail Colleen: colfenbu@vt.edu to get the password!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ [NC Trappers Association Annual Convention](#) – Lawndale, NC (September 28-30, 2017)
- ◆ [Environmental Educators of NC Annual Conference](#) – Fuquay-Varina, NC (September 29 – October 1, 2017)
- ◆ [4th Biennial Shortleaf Pine Conference](#) – Galloway, NJ (October 3-5, 2017)
- ◆ [NC Trappers Association Mountain Rendezvous](#) – Lawndale, NC (October 7, 2017)
- ◆ [Natural Areas Conference](#) – Fort Collins, CO (October 10-12, 2017)
- ◆ [North Carolina State Fair](#) – Raleigh, NC (October 12-22, 2017)
- ◆ NC Tree Farm Program Annual Meeting – Wagram, NC (October 14, 2017)
- ◆ [SEAFWA Conference](#) – Louisville, KY (October 29 – November 1, 2017)
- ◆ [Bottomland and Swamp Hardwood Forest Symposium](#) – Wilmington, NC (October 31 – November 2, 2017)
- ◆ [Advanced Beaver Trapping Workshop](#) – Trenton, NC (November 4, 2017)
- ◆ [Society of American Foresters National Convention](#) – Albuquerque, NM (November 15-19, 2017)
- ◆ [Advanced Beaver Trapping Workshop](#) – Spencer, NC (November 18, 2017)
- ◆ [7th Association for Fire Ecology Conference](#) – Orlando, FL (November 28 – December 2, 2017)
- ◆ [Innovations in Invasive Species Management Conference](#) – Nashville, TN (December 13-15, 2017)

THE **WILDLIFE** NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER
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Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship Through Science and Education

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ [Southeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Annual Conference](#) – Helen, GA (February 22-25, 2018)
- ◆ [41st Annual Meeting of the Southeast Deer Study Group](#) – Nashville, TN (February 19-21, 2018)
- ◆ NCTWS Annual Meeting – Haw River State Park (February 27 – March 1, 2018)
Registration, agenda, and details in the next newsletter!
- ◆ [Dixie Deer Classic](#) – Raleigh, NC (March 2-4, 2018)
- ◆ NC Waterbird Management Committee & Partners Meeting – Swansboro, NC (March 8-9, 2018)
- ◆ TWS Southeastern Wildlife Conclave – Baton Rouge, LA (March 24-27, 2018)
- ◆ [5th International Human-Bear Conflicts Workshop](#) – Gatlinburg, TN (March 25-29, 2018)
- ◆ [Southeastern Bat Diversity Network](#) – Roanoke, VA (March 26-30, 2018)
Joint meeting with the Midwest Bat Working Group and the Northeast Bat Working Group
- ◆ [83rd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference](#) – Norfolk, VA (March 26-30, 2018)
- ◆ [2018 Amphibian Taxon Advisory Group \(ATAG\) Advanced Training Course](#) (focusing on Amphibian Field Research Techniques) – Asheboro, NC (April 29—May 4, 2018)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Come join us for a NCTWS Executive Board Meeting in 2017!

All members are welcome to attend in person or via Skype. Our meetings usually run from 10am – 2pm, and are scheduled for the following dates:

October 11, 2017
December 5, 2017

Contact Jeff Marcus at jmarcus@tnc.org or (910) 585-0521 for meeting details (location, agenda, Skype invitation, etc.).



Chapter Vision Statement

To guide and promote the conservation and management of wildlife resources throughout North Carolina

Do you have a research or management project you think your fellow NCTWS members would enjoy hearing about? Do you have an idea for a new item in the newsletter? Or perhaps you would like to submit an article for publication? If so, please let us know!

Feel free to email Kelly Douglass at kedougla1@gmail.com, or the NCTWS at admin@nctws.org.

Thank you for reading!

Andrea Shipley & Kelly Douglass

NCTWS Newsletter Co-editors

Visit us online:
nctws.org



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