At a glance:

**Annual Meeting**
Picture of Dogwood, courtesy of Andrea Shipley.

**Award Winners**
L-R: Rada Petric and Lindsey Zarecky, courtesy of Colleen Olfenbuttel.

**#ExploreNC!**
Hillsborough Riverwalk, courtesy of Marie Young.
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## NCTWS Executive Board

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Hello and Happy Spring!

I hope the latest edition of the NC Wildlifer finds you well. I have been enjoying this lovely spring weather. While this should be the norm for a typical May Day, it feels like the last several years have jumped straight from winter to summer, giving minimal opportunity to enjoy the sunshine before it casts that fine sheen of sweat on your brow.

My favorite part of spring is experiencing the resurgence of plants and insects. Everyone has their own personal preference of how to celebrate the season, whether it is taking a long hike with extra daylight, spotting an elusive migratory bird, stalking an unsuspecting turkey, or casting the perfect line. Or maybe, it’s just stepping outside without a coat. Regardless of how these days are spent, I hope you can savor the moment before summer is upon us.

Over the last few months, the Program Committee has been diligently planning our 2024 annual meeting in the mountains. We’re experiencing increased membership numbers, and we couldn’t be happier. If you’re a new member, we’re so grateful to have you on board! As you learn more about our Chapter, have you considered joining a committee and contributing your voice, ideas, and knowledge? Having said that, if you’re a senior and/or existing member, have you considered joining a committee and contributing your voice, ideas, and knowledge? We have 14 committees (www.nctws.org/wordpress/committees/) that perform many different tasks. Here’s a teaser: we are working to create a new committee that will provide opportunities to underserved and underrepresented communities. Have you looked at our list of committees?
You can contribute to the newsletter, assist with social media, take part in planning our annual meeting, mentor a student or new professional, and much more. Are you interested in learning about the Executive Board? I hope you said yes. We meet every other month on Wednesdays. We always have a virtual option, so you can either meet us in person (in June and October) or join Teams and listen to the conversation. I do a lot of outreach and education for my job, whether it’s planning workshops, presenting at conferences, or speaking to community groups. I love getting people excited about wildlife and the outdoors. I especially like when people want to talk after a presentation to ask questions; hopefully that means I’m doing something right. If you’re a member of this Chapter, it’s fair to say that you are also excited about wildlife. This Chapter gives us a good opportunity to spread that knowledge and enthusiasm to others.

One of my favorite stories to relay at presentations pertains to insects: I was talking to a Homeowners Association group in Johnston County. They had planted milkweed because they wanted to grow Monarch butterflies. Monarchs are poised to be listed as a federally threatened or endangered species, so they need all the help they can get. This community couldn’t understand why they weren’t seeing Monarch butterflies in their garden. Well, as it turns out, the residents had been killing Monarch caterpillars, thinking they were detrimental to the plants because they were eating the leaves. Yikes. But now they know the details of a butterfly’s lifecycle, and have a beautiful native, pollinator garden safe for Monarch butterflies *and* caterpillars. A little outreach goes a long way!

As we roll into the coming months, please don’t hesitate to reach out with any questions, comments, or concerns. I’d love to chat with you!
Please join your fellow wildlife professionals at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, April 2-4, 2024! Next year's theme is 'Partnerships in Habitat Conservation for At-risk Species'. Mark your calendars and plan for an engaging conference at a beautiful location with fun social activities and auctions!
The theme of the 2023 NCTWS Annual Meeting was “Partnerships for Conservation and Resiliency in a Changing Climate”. We had 122 attendees from 29 different agencies, universities, and organizations participate in the meeting. We had approximately 26 students representing 4 schools: University of North Carolina Wilmington, Haywood Community College, North Carolina State University, and University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Thank you to all the students and speakers who made our meeting a success!

We had 13 invited speakers give presentations or lead field tours/workshops over the course of 2 days on various topics: Dr. Mark Anderson, Dr. Caleb Hickman, Lauren Pharr, Isaac Hinson, Kevin Hiers, Carmella Stirrat, Dr. Rebecca Irwin, Dr. Scott Pearson, Wes Boone, Dr. Christopher Moorman, Cathryn Greenberg, Dr. Susan McRae, Marae West, and Dr. Liz Hillard.
The NCTWS would like to thank the folks serving on the Program Committee: Lindsey Zarecky (co-chair), Olivia Munzer (co-chair), Brandon Bridges (member), Kacy Cook (member), David Mattocks (member), Jeff Marcus (member), and Dr. Rada Petric (member) for all their efforts in putting together a successful program with insightful presenters! Several other folks deserve thanks as well for their involvement in the logistical aspects of the meeting: Colleen Olfenbuttel and Gabriela Garrison were our unofficial meeting photographers, Kacy Cook coordinated our sustainability efforts with NC Green Power, Dr. Chris DePerno organized the student poster session, Pete Campbell emceed the live auction, Katie Proctor assisted with fundraising efforts, Dr. Rada Petric helped with AV needs, and Lindsey Zarecky aided with refreshments. We would be remiss without acknowledging the hard work and dedication from those staffing the registration table: David Mattocks, James Tomberlin, Kacy Cook, Colleen Olfenbuttel, Kelly Douglass, and Susan Miller!
During the 2023 annual meeting, we raised over $4,900 dollars! Special thanks to Josh Shope, Rob Gilson, Dr. Richard Lancia, Lee Efrid, John Isenhour, April Rice, and Nantahala Outdoor Center for providing the raffle expeditions and live auction trips! Thank you also to Pete Campbell for being the emcee for the live auctions. Lastly, a HUGE thanks to the many generous donors and bidders for making the auctions a massive success this year!!

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We still have tumblers, koozies, and stickers for sale with the NEW Chapter logo! Contact Colleen for yours today!!

We also have a website you can go to and find your perfect t-shirt, hoodie, and pint glass!
The recipient of the 2022 Chapter Award has a long and distinguished career in North Carolina. In 1997, this individual earned an Associate of Arts and Sciences Degree in Fish and Wildlife Management Technology from Haywood Community College, and in 1998 he earned an Associate of Arts and Sciences Degree in Forest Management Technology from Haywood Community College. In 1998, Shannon Rabby worked as a Seasonal Wildlife Technician with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission in Andrews and Franklin, North Carolina.

In 2000, he worked as a Forestry Aid with the U.S. Forest Service at the Pisgah Ranger District followed by a summer stint as a Field Research Assistant at the University of Wyoming/National Park Service Research Station in Grand Teton National Park. In 2001, he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Natural Resource Management with a Forestry Concentration from Western Carolina University. From 2001-2006, Shannon was a Biology Lecturer with the Haywood Community College Division of Arts and Sciences. In 2005, he earned a Master of Science in Biology from Western Carolina University. During the summers of 2006 and 2007, Shannon was an instructor in the Upward Bound Math and Science Program at Western Carolina University. Since 2006, Shannon has been an Instructor of Fish and Wildlife Management Technology at Haywood Community College and took over as the Lead Instructor in 2013.

Since 2013, Shannon has been the primary advisor for the Haywood Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society. Shannon was instrumental in preparing the chapter to co-host the Southeastern Wildlife Conclave in 2022 and, under his leadership, the Haywood Student Chapter was awarded the Southeast Section Student Chapter of the Year in 2002. Shannon coaches the quiz bowl team and they are always competitive and a tough team to compete against.
Shannon is an active member of The Wildlife Society and former Secretary for the North American Wildlife Technology Association.

Locally, Shannon leads by example by encouraging students to participate in annual community conservation efforts. Shannon works with students, faculty, and staff alongside members of the community to present Haywood’s annual Brook and Beast Feast. He works with the Haywood Waterways Association’s Kids in the Creek Program, which exposes eighth-grade students to hands-on activities that raise awareness of the importance of clean water and the issues that could degrade water quality. In addition, he coordinates the Big Sweep community service activity to clean litter out of local waterways that removes hundreds of pounds of trash from local streams each year. Shannon coordinates with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to provide an annual kid’s fishing day on Haywood’s campus. Rumor is that Shannon dresses up and pretends to fish without a license, litters, and behaves irresponsibly until NCWRC Enforcement Officers arrive to arrest him to the delight of all the kids watching.

Recently, he has appeared on local radio shows and campus podcasts to promote conservation and the wildlife program at Haywood and he has developed course content and online modules in Fish and Wildlife Management Technology to offer to online students. After an initial evaluation phase, these modules have been made available in a statewide online educational database for use in other community colleges.

Shannon is a fantastic, passionate teacher who inspires his students to achieve great success in wildlife management and forestry. He is unselfish and always willing to share his knowledge and experience to help those around him be better teachers, biologists, and people. Shannon’s calm demeanor makes him approachable by students and he is an important role model for all students at Haywood Community College.

Shannon’s compassion and dedication to his students and wildlife and forest management throughout North Carolina is impressive. Therefore, it is my honor and pleasure to present the 2023 Chapter Award to Shannon Rabby.

Pictured L-R: Shannon Rabby, Harry Weisbecker, Kai Picciano, and Andrew Isenhower. Photo courtesy of Shannon Rabby.
Dr. Riddick Ricks is a retired veterinarian with 37 years of full-time practice in North Carolina. His special interests in medicine were cardiology, orthopedic surgery, and ultrasound imaging at the Roanoke Animal Hospital in Roanoke Rapids. In 1997, Riddick was selected as a Regional Medical Director in the largest veterinary organization in the country and served on their National Medical Advisory Board. He is an active Member of Christian Veterinary Missions where he served on the CVM Board of Directors for 7 years. Also, he served on the Halifax County Health Department Board of Directors for 11 years and the Roanoke Canal Trail and Museum Board of Directors for 10 years.

Riddick has been married to his wife, Alice, for 47 years. They have two sons, Ben and Will, who are actively involved in natural resource stewardship. Ben is a certified fisheries biologist and Coastal Region Fisheries Supervisor with the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission and Will is a certified wildlife biologist for Duke Energy overseeing their threatened and endangered species program.

Whispering Pines Wildlife Preserve, LLC was established in 2013 to help preserve the stewardship goals of their 1,250-acre five generation family forest. Alice is very active in the tree farm with a special interest in native wildflowers, butterflies, songbirds, and education of those touring the wildlife preserve. Both Riddick and Alice grew up on farms in eastern North Carolina and started their stewardship journey at a young age.
Here are some of Riddick’s stewardship accomplishments:

- Lifetime member of NCTWS
- NC Tree Farm Program member since 1984
- Past member of the NC Tree Farm Program Board of Directors and Executive Committee
- Served on of the NC Forestry Association Board of Directors for 8 years
- Northampton County Forestry Association member and Northampton County Tree Farmer of the Year
- 2009 NC Tree Farmer of the Year
- 2010 and 2012 Finalist for National Tree Farmer of the Year
- 2018 appointed to the Governor’s Forestry Advisory Council

In addition to the NCTWS, NCWF, NCTFP, and the NCFA, the Ricks family forest is actively involved and enrolled in other numerous wildlife and forestry memberships including

- Enrollment in the Forest Conservation Service Program
- Red-cockaded Woodpecker Safe Harbor Program
- NC Bluebird Sanctuary
- NC Forest Stewardship Farm
- NC Upland Habitat Farm
- NC Voluntary Agricultural District Program
- Certified Federal Landbird Legacy Program
- Quality Deer Management Farm
- NC Butterfly Highway
- NC Certified Prescribed Fire Managed Property

Wildlife conservation activities include

- Sustainable Pine and Hardwood Forest Management
- Riparian and Wetland Protection Following BMPs
- Prescribed Fire as a NC Certified Burner
- Invasive Exotic Species Control
- Fruit Tree Orchards
- Field Borders and Wind Breaks
- Promoting Quality Soils
- Sunflower/Sorghum Dove Fields
- Native Warm Season Grass Management
- Food Plot Management with Summer and Winter Plots
- Protection of Native Wildflowers
- Bee Hives, Pollinator Plantings, and Monarch Butterfly Habitat
- Bluebird and Wood Duck Boxes and Associated Surveys
- Quality Deer Management and Associated Surveys
- Maintaining Wildlife Sanctuaries
- Educational Field Trips and Workshops
- Pond Management
- Providing Technical Assistance to Landowners
- Game and Non Game Management under an Extensive Management Plan

The Ricks family is a family of faith and feels their forest stewardship honors God by using responsible forest management practices which promote a sustainable forest environment to all native species of wildlife and flora.

In short, Dr. Riddick Ricks and the Ricks Family have contributed much to wildlife and forestry conservation. Therefore, it is our pleasure to present the 2023 Wildlife Conservation Award to Dr. Riddick Ricks.
Brandy Wible is a Master of Science - Environmental Conservation and Management student at the University of North Carolina Wilmington in the Department of Environmental Sciences. She is also a Marine Corps veteran, a wife of an active Marine, and the mother of a beautiful little girl named Sage. As a non-traditional graduate student, Brandy certainly already has her hands full with life responsibilities and yet she miraculously bends time to incorporate research, mentoring of undergraduate students, and presiding as President of the Seahawk Wildlife Society into her day-to-day schedule. As expected of any graduate student, Brandy has excelled at her coursework, but she also is methodically working through courses she needs for TWS’s Associate Wildlife Biologist certification. As many who have aspired for the certification are aware, the plant taxonomy and botany credits are usually the weakest section on applications. As a graduate student, it may be even harder to find these courses. Brandy was determined to gain knowledge in this requirement and successfully convinced Dr. Rother, EVS’s Forest Fire Ecologist, to create a graduate-level directed independent course in dendrology so she and other graduate students could learn that material. In a non-thesis graduate program, students have two choices: do the minimum coursework and get their degree or dive into the vast opportunities that a flexible non-thesis system can offer to enhance their skillsets. Of course, Brandy chose the latter. Brandy joined Dr. Urbanek’s lab in her second semester and got her “research” feet wet on the revolving Hwy. 64 Wildlife Movement Patterns team. After spending the semester reviewing, organizing, and relabeling over 84,000 game camera images, Brandy was hooked on gaining more research experience. Brandy worked with Dr. Urbanek to create a pilot study evaluating the efficacy of sampling techniques for the Carolina pygmy rattlesnake in Southeastern North Carolina. Together, they received a UNCW Community Engagement grant for the project that began in May 2022 and ended in May 2023. Brandy has spent many hours flipping coverboards, checking funnel traps by drift fences, and conducting night surveys for this state listed species of concern. Luckily, her daughter Sage is a herp-magnet and was a willing participant in field work! In addition to her own project, Brandy took a senior EVS student under her wing and has been a valuable mentor in the undergraduate’s side project of the pygmy rattlesnake study. Brandy and Ally have worked as a dynamic duo, presenting their work as a Research-in-Progress poster at the Annual TWS Conference in Spokane and preparing a manuscript with Dr. Urbanek. Last, but not least, Brandy has been an exemplar President of the Seahawk Wildlife Society. She has successfully grown the club membership since it dropped during the pandemic and expanded the opportunities for student members to learn from and help in field work from wildlife professionals. If anyone has ever read the description of Ken Wilson on NCTWS’ website, the man is described as a “an outstanding biologist, a scientist, a gentleman, and a dedicated professional” and a “shining example for others to follow.” Brandy fits this description in the most modern way!
The advisors of the North Carolina State University’s Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society nominate Chase Carey for the NCTWS Ken Wilson Award.

Chase is a pre-vet student in the Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology program and is in the top 1% of students in the major academically. Chase aspires to be a wildlife veterinarian and is particularly interested in international wildlife conservation. Chase excels in his wildlife classes as well as in his prerequisite courses for veterinary school. Despite his heavy coursework, Chase remained highly involved in the Leopold Wildlife Club throughout his four years at NC State, despite the many challenges associated with COVID.

In his freshman year, Chase first impressed us with his nonstop hustle at the Club’s annual Wild Foods Supper. Chase was there for the entire day, ready to help in any way that was needed and never stopping for a break. In his junior year, Chase served as the Treasurer for the club, and he handled the technical responsibilities of that position with efficiency and competence. This year, Chase is serving as the president of the Leopold Wildlife Club. Chase is a strong leader, working closely with his fellow officers. He and the club leadership team planned and implemented several events in the fall, including deer spotlight surveys, volunteering at hunter check stations, a nighttime owl walk, a turtle search day in collaboration with the Herpetology club, and a radio telemetry workshop.

This spring the club leaders are coordinating a scavenger hunt at the Dixie Deer Classic, monitoring wood duck boxes at a local park, planning the annual Wild Foods Supper, and of course, preparing for the much awaited Southeastern Wildlife Conclave.

Chase’s calm and organized leadership style is welcoming to all students, and sets a strong example for the next cohort of Leopold Wildlife Club leaders.
We are proud to announce Chelsie Jarvis as the Ken Wilson Memorial Award winner for Western Carolina University. As co-president of the Forestry and Wildlife Club, Chelsie exemplifies hard work and dedication to the profession and has maintained a strong academic record.

Chelsie is a double major in Natural Resource Conservation and Management and Environmental Science and a double minor in Geography and Chemistry at WCU. She has made the Dean’s List and the Chancellor’s List every semester since she began her degree in the Fall of 2019 with a GPA of 3.5 or higher each semester. Her upbringing as an avid outdoorswoman on a family-owned farm has instilled a strong connection to conservation that is apparent in her work. She is an asset to every classroom, engaging in critical thinking while being an effective and respectful team member. In her time at WCU, Chelsie has served as a leader in many capacities, including Vice President of Eco CATS (Conservation Awareness Team for Sustainability) and Outreach Officer and Co-president for the Forestry and Wildlife Club. She is a dedicated leader who, along with her peers, has reinvigorated the Club to pre-COVID involvement. She has played a critical role in the overall restructuring of the club, requiring participation in intellectual and experiential events as well as contributions to fundraising. She has reorganized communication on the Discord platform and excels at keeping members up to date on activities and opportunities created for her peers. She has volunteered her time to assist with the organization of and participation in deer check stations, eagle nest surveys, water quality monitoring, and GIS trainings.

Chelsie has distinguished herself through her leadership skills, positive attitude, and strong work ethic.
Harry Weisbecker has demonstrated consistent leadership and dedication to the field of wildlife management. He is very active in the Haywood Community College Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society, participating in deer check stations, work crews, and many fundraising activities. While serving as Chapter President, he has demonstrated a great capacity for leadership while he has guided HCC’s student chapter through challenging times as it has bounced back from COVID restrictions.

His biggest challenge has been bringing our chapter back to a normal level after over two years of limited activity. Harry leads by example, takes both praise and criticism with the same calm, has a positive demeanor, and is never too busy to take on a new challenge. He took a major leadership role in the hosting of the 2022 Southeastern Conclave at HCC and the chapter’s annual Brook and Beast Feast. Along with being president of HCC’s student chapter, he is also the captain of the school’s quiz bowl team, which traveled to Spokane, WA for the national TWS meeting in November of 2022. There, he competed against 4-year university students and did his school proud. He will captain the team for the Southeastern Wildlife Conclave this spring.

I can say without hesitation that Harry Weisbecker is highly deserving of the 2022 Ken Wilson Memorial Award. He exhibits the professionalism and dedication that are the hallmarks of a wildlife professional and he has a high probability of future success in his chosen field. He aspires to continue his education at a 4-year institution and would make an excellent addition to any collegiate student body. The success of HCC’s student chapter over the last year is strong evidence that he is an exemplary candidate for the Ken Wilson Memorial Award.

Developing a status assessment of the Henslow’s Sparrow in North Carolina to guide management and enhance state-wide persistence

1. Asses Henslow’s Sparrow habitat use and response to fire management
   - The Henslow’s Sparrow (Ammodramus henslowii) is a threatened species, migratory
   - We are converting the sparrow’s response in the environment by monitoring
     the transparency of the habitat and fire management practices.
   - Fire management practices include the scientific basis for the habitat use.

2. Determine population size and growth over time in North Carolina
   - Based on distance sampling analysis, we estimate
     the population size in the state.
   - The total population size was 75,000 in 2019.
   - For the 2021 breeding season, we estimate
     the population size.

3. Estimate genetic diversity within North Carolina and distinctiveness compared to other breeding populations
   - The Henslow’s Sparrow population may be diverging genetically from
     the wider population, possibly even separate to a subspecies of the U.S. population.
   - Nesting sites and habitat use are monitored to test
     differences in genetic diversity.
   - Genetic diversity and population structure differences will be assessed.

4. Determine species redundancy and distribution in eastern North Carolina
   - The Henslow’s Sparrow is a high-priority species
   - It has a wide distribution in the state.
   - The primary threats to the species are habitat loss.
   - Management strategies are developed to enhance
     the species.

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North Carolina has its plethora of cute small towns, and Hillsborough ranks among its best. The town of Hillsborough is oriented 30 minutes away from Chapel Hill and Durham and boasts an impressive array of activities. However, the Riverwalk is easily one of the best attractions that this small town has to offer, combining town history and modern conservation efforts to provide an enjoyable experience for everyone. The two-mile trail begins at the Historic Eno River Mill and follows the Eno River as it twists and turns through the downtown area, eventually ending at the Occoneechee Speedway.

While you walk beside the river, you will cross bridges, look up at train tracks, and maybe even see a few conservation volunteers working near the trail! The Town of Hillsborough is dedicated to restoring sections of the Eno River to their former glory, eradicating invasive plant species and conserving the riparian areas. In an effort to mitigate the impact of this construction, extra care and attention were taken to build the accessible walkways using preservation techniques designed to protect trees and the sensitive soils as well as safeguard significant historical sites.
The Historic Eno River Mill, the first stop on the walk, was once a flourishing textile factory that provided jobs to many residents of Hillsborough. You can still view the impressive mill today and learn about its rich history. It has since then been converted into business spaces featuring a mosaics school, an event venue, and the local Weaver Street Market. As you continue down the paved path, you will pass Gold Park, the perfect place to stop and let kids or animals run wild in the wide grassy spaces and explore the playground and dog park. The Riverwalk continues into town, where the Eno River Farmers Market provides fresh produce and delightful wares from local farms and businesses every Saturday morning.

The trail concludes at the Occoneechee Speedway, the only surviving NASCAR dirt track from their inaugural season in 1949. Even though the last races occurred in 1968, you can still walk the track, explore the vintage cars parked around it, and fall backwards into time as you envision what the speedway looked like at the height of its popularity.

When you visit Hillsborough, I would suggest parking downtown in the parking garage, grabbing a pastry from Weaver Street Market, and setting out to explore the beautiful landscape, keeping your eyes out for any intriguing creatures you might find on your adventure.
The goal of COWCH is to preserve the history and evolution of the wildlife profession by interviewing influential wildlife biologists, educators, managers, and other conservation heroes. Through these interviews, COWCH hopes to offer guidance to the new generation of wildlife professionals by exploring personal experiences, reflections and advice to people getting started in the field.

Click on the link to listen to the amazing stories!

By David Mattocks
2023-2024 Election Results

MEET YOUR NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD!

Danny Ray
Past-President

Gabriela Garrison
President

Rada Petric
President-Elect

Liz Hillard
Secretary

Justin McVey
Treasurer

Liz Rutledge
At-large Board

David Mattocks
At-large Board

Kelsey Pistner
SE Section Rep
I retired as Dean of the College of Natural Resources at NC State in 2012. As a brief introduction, I was raised in Stockton, CA and was an Animal Husbandry major at UC-Davis (1963-65), then an Animal Nutrition major at CSU (1965-68) where I did an internship working on deer physiology. I was in the Marines and in Vietnam (1968-71). I received my Ph.D. in Animal Nutrition/Physiology from Penn State in 1975. I taught and did comparative wildlife nutrition and biomedical research at Texas A&M University/Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (1975-87), was Department Head at Mississippi State (1987-93) and at Texas A&M (1993-2006), and then Dean at NCSU for 6 years. I retired as a Lt.Col. in the Marine Corps Reserves in 1993.

I received two pieces of advice from colleagues before I retired: “You need a plan,” and “Be careful what you volunteer for.” My plan was to do any darn thing I liked, so I went tandem sky-diving on my first day of retirement. I had intended to volunteer for free to teach my on-line, graduate course in Wildlife Nutrition, finish membership on some graduate committees, and give some lectures on ethics to the Vet School. Unfortunately, that year the Legislature passed a rule that retirees could not volunteer to do anything for 6 months after retirement. By then, I had other things going on.

Actually, I had way too much going on (the 2nd piece of advice). I was on several natural resource/conservation boards, all of which required travel with no reimbursement. I had to drop some. Being a Past President of The Wildlife Society, I have continued to attend annual national meetings, review manuscripts, and serve on committees. I wrote some articles and served on the Editorial Advisory Board of The Wildlife Professional. My most recent publication was “The History of Wildlife Conservation in North America,” a chapter in Wildlife Management and Conservation, 2nd ed.
For we retirees, every day is Saturday!”

(2022, Krausman and Cain, Eds.). I was asked to join the Board of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation, served as Chair, and continue as Liaison to the NWF.

Having served on the Boy Scout Occoneechee Council while Dean, when I retired I asked if there was something “real” I could do; I’ve been a certified ATV Safety Instructor at Camp Durant, near Carthage 1-5 weeks every summer for the past 10 years. I was a Kayaking Instructor at the International Jamboree in WVA in 2019 and plan to do so again at the National Jamboree this year. My 3 sons were Eagle Scouts, so I had 20+ years leading Scout groups.

For about 9 years I belonged to Hope Floats, part of the Relay for Life, which raises money for cancer research. Each year 15-20 of us got sponsors and paddled down the Neuse River from Raleigh to Oriental, 240 miles over 8 days. I now belong to an “Over 50” kayaking group as well as an “Over the Hill” hiking group.

A major change in my life was becoming a Buddhist. Out of curiosity, I took a 6-week, then a 2-year course in Buddhism at the Kadampa Center in Raleigh. Subsequently, I joined the Won Buddhist Temple in Chapel Hill, where I participate regularly.

Except for the 2 years of COVID, a major joy in our lives has been travel. We have a son in Houston, another with his wife in NY/NJ, and another with his wife and our 3 grandchildren in Aarhus, Denmark. We go there at least once a year and have extended those trips to include Iceland and multiple trips to Spain. We just returned from 20 days in India with our NY son, his wife, and her parents. We’ll go to Denmark again this spring. I’ve been to a couple of H.S. reunions and those of my Marine Corps Officer’s Class, the 60th and 55th are coming up soon.

As far as day-to-day or week-to-week life, my wife, Regan and I belong to two concert groups with friends, and we like to read, watch Netflix, and do gardening/trash clean ups with the South Wake Conservationists. I’ve done a couple of webinars for that NCWF Chapter as well. I still go to Lifetime Fitness a couple of times a week. Regan is a retired Nurse Practitioner and volunteers weekly at the Open Doors Clinic in Raleigh. She does a lot of volunteer gardening for our HOA, and I help at times. I’m a Professional Member of the Boone & Crocket Club, and I still go deer hunting annually, though I haven’t shot at anything in years. I love the hunting (meditating?), but no longer care for the killing.

All in all, life is good, except I have trouble remembering what day it is. For we retirees, every day is Saturday!
The Corvid Club has another successful fundraiser during the 2023 Annual Meeting!

In 2021, COVID-19 had shaken up everything, including the cancellation of the in-person 2021 NCTWS Annual Meeting and, by default, annual fundraising events, such as silent auction, live auction, and raffle trips. To replace these fundraising mechanisms, the NCTWS Fundraising Committee introduced an alternative way for NCTWS members to support student chapters, grants, and awards – The Corvid Club! The Corvid Club was so well received by NCTWS members that it is now a permanent part of NCTWS fundraising efforts.

The Corvid Club’s goal is to generate an ongoing, additional revenue stream for NCTWS to support students and student chapters. The Corvid Club donations fund the four Ken Wilson Awards, the SETWS Field Course grant, NCTWS Annual Meeting student grants, and various student chapter activities and events (e.g., Lunch and Learns, Resume review, Student Conclave).

To gain “membership” in The Corvid Club, simply donate a minimum of $25, either prior to or during the NCTWS Annual Meeting. NCTWS members who donated in the 2021 inaugural year of The Corvid Club are considered charter members.

Annual Corvid Club donors will receive:
- A free corvid-themed alcoholic beverage at The Corvid Club Social that takes place at the NCTWS Annual Meeting (non-alcoholic beverages are also provided free of charge);
- A special name tag ribbon to wear at the Annual NCTWS Meeting;
- First-time donors receive a free decal of the NCTWS Chapter logo;
- Second-time donors receive a free koozie of the NCTWS Chapter;
- Their names published in the NCTWS newsletter and on our Chapter website.
I’m not going to lie… I went into the wrong field first. With a Bachelor’s in Biology, I initially wanted to go into the medical field. After getting into a graduate program in the medical field, I quickly realized that field was not what I was passionate about. After much soul-searching and considering my interests throughout my life, I kept coming back to one topic: animals. I’ve always been interested in animals and the outdoors, but never thought it was a field I could work in. At first, I thought maybe I could combine my interests of animals and medicine and go into the veterinary field, but that didn’t work out either.
I’m incredibly allergic to cats and could barely make it trying to shadow a veterinarian in a clinic for a few hours. So, I went back to the drawing board. How else could I work with animals? At that point, I started researching careers working with wildlife and thought it would be a good fit. I interrogated the incredibly patient department chair for Environmental Studies at UNC Wilmington for several hours to make sure that I was making the right move for my future. He made me feel right at home during our conversation, so I submitted my application for their graduate program. The professors at UNC Wilmington, especially Dr. Rachael Urbanek, helped provide me with the knowledge, skills, and resources I needed to become a successful professional in the wildlife field. I wouldn’t trade it for anything!

Yes! I grew up spending a lot of time outdoors, visiting parks and museums, and hunting. My parents noted my interests and provided me with many opportunities to learn more about animals and the outdoors. I read lots of ZooBooks and other books from the library to learn more about animals, even being a mega-nerd and writing to book authors to get more information about my favorite species. Funny story: my grandparents just showed me a video this past weekend of 11-year old me video recording squirrels, chipmunks, and birds at their bird feeder (with full 11-year old commentary... it was quite entertaining!). Thinking back on all of these memories contributed to my decision to switch fields in grad school.

My great-uncle Russell Burleson (who worked for NCWRC many years ago) picked up on my interests when I was very young, and always encouraged me to look into the wildlife field. I didn’t think too much of it then, but look where I ended up! My parents have also been very supportive of my career choice. As previously mentioned, they provided me with many opportunities to learn more about animals and the outdoors growing up. I also greatly appreciate the knowledge, skills, and encouragement I received from Rachael Urbanek at UNCW and Emily Gaydos at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. They have both been huge influences on my career and have helped me get to where I am today.

I would probably either say sea turtles or songbirds (no species in particular). I’ve been fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a variety of species and habitats. I knew a lot about our local species and habitats in coastal NC, but when I took this position in FL, I felt like I was almost starting over. Florida has SO MANY plant and animal species, many of which I was unfamiliar with. Even after living here for 3 years, I still feel like I have a lot to learn. Because my job primarily consists of reviewing consultation requests under the Endangered Species Act, I have had to learn a lot about the federally listed species we have in FL (including sea
turtle species, West Indian manatees, Florida bonneted bats, Florida panthers, Florida scrub-jays, eastern indigo snakes, wood storks, red-cockaded woodpeckers, sand skinks, bluetail mole skinks, Everglade snail kites, Audubon’s crested caracaras, and many more!). I volunteer for a few local organizations to do sea turtle work in my free time. After working with sea turtles for several years in NC, I wasn’t quite ready to give that up!

**WHAT HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR WILDLIFE CAREER SO FAR?**

I really don’t know that I can pick one particular highlight. I get excited every time I get to work with animals or see something new. It never gets old!

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT IN WILDLIFE?**

Volunteer, intern, or shadow whenever you can! Networking is also crucial. The wildlife field is relatively small and competitive, and you want to do all you can to stand out from others trying to enter this field. Plus, the field experiences you can get when just starting out can be really fun!

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST FULFILLING EXPERIENCE WITH TWS?**

Networking! I have met so many wildlife professionals through The Wildlife Society. Everyone has been very supportive, and I have been able to connect with quite a few people I have met through TWS for work or school opportunities. I mean... I’m still a member of NCTWS even though I haven’t lived there for 3 years, if that tells you how much I value it! A few students have also reached out to me through TWS’ mentoring database, and it has been great getting to provide advice to them, take them into the field, and see where their interests take them.

**WHAT WOULD YOUR FELLOW BIOLOGISTS BE SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT YOU?**

I’m pretty much an open book, so I’m not sure what people would be surprised to learn about me. How about some random facts?

- I play softball year-round.
- I’m almost 9 months pregnant at the time of writing this (so no softball right now, technically!).
- If I had a superpower, it would be to know the answer any time I had a question. That way, I wouldn’t be plagued with some depressing things like I could have been if I had the superpower of knowing everything, but I would know what I wanted to know when I wanted to know it.
- If you’re into personality assessments, I’m an Enneagram 3w2, Myers-Briggs ESTJ, DiSC Supportive/Interactive, and Taking Flight (similar to DiSC) Dove/Parrot.
- I enjoy learning/practicing foreign languages and have >800 day streak on Duolingo.

If you're into personality assessments, I'm an Enneagram 3w2, Myers-Briggs ESTJ, DiSC Supportive/Interactive, and Taking Flight (similar to DiSC) Dove/Parrot.

Holly holding loggerhead sea turtle hatchling. Photo courtesy of Joe Rimkus.
### NCTWS Lifetime Memberships

**Lifetime Members:**

#001 – Kelly Douglass  
#002 – John Ann Shearer  
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#029 – Steven Everhart  
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#031 – Rachael Urbanek  
#032 – Katie Proctor  
#033 – Nancy Adamson  
#034 – This could be YOU!

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Upcoming Events

**Ecological Society of America Annual Meeting**
August 6-11, 2023, Portland, OR
Learn more [HERE](#)

**113th AFWA Annual Meeting**
September 24-27, 2023
Learn more [HERE](#)

**77th SEAFWA Conference**
October 15-18, 2023, Corpus Christi, TX
Learn more [HERE](#)

**The Wildlife Society 30th Annual Conference**
November 5-9, 2023, Louisville, KY
Learn more [HERE](#)

**Trappers Rendezvous**
September 29-30, 2023, Smithfield, NC
Learn more [HERE](#)

**102nd Annual Meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists**
July 14-20, 2023, Anchorage, AK
Learn more [HERE](#)

**Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (JMIH)**
July 12-16, 2023, Norfolk, VA
Learn more [HERE](#)
On June 1, 2023, the Southeast Regional Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service presented the Red Wolf Program team with the Regional Director’s Honor Award for their efforts recovering the critically endangered red wolf.

The Southeast Regional Director’s Honor Awards are given to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partners and employees who have made significant contributions towards accomplishing the Service’s mission and the Region’s vision in the last two years. The region’s vision is "Together we will connect lands and waters to sustain fish, wildlife, and plants by being visionary leaders, bold innovators and trusted partners, working with and for people."

Per the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "The members of the Red Wolf Program Team collaborated to find common ground with diverse groups who sometimes opposed their efforts. During publicly charged meetings, legislative oversight, long weekends, and late nights, the team respected varied perspectives and maintained dialogue with elected officials and private landowners."
"Active communication and engaging outreach with private landowners, state agency representatives, and non-governmental organizations, among others, resulted in favorable responses to the recovery plan. Transparency led to greater trust among all vested parties as well as positive recovery results for the red wolf.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service released captive red wolves in Spring 2021. In Spring 2022, the first known wild red wolf litter since 2018 was born in eastern NC. Additional releases and litters are anticipated in 2023.

The Red Wolf Program Team transformed the narrative from one of despair to one of hope and optimism.

The members of the Red Wolf Program Team include Pete Benjamin, Art Beyer, Morgan Lewis, Luke Lolies, Joe Madison, Ryan Nordsven, Shaun Olson, and Emily Weller.

Be sure to congratulate them when you see them!
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! Thanks for reading!

- The NCTWS Editing Team