



North Carolina Chapter  
The Wildlife Society



Winter 2023

Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship Through Science and Education

# NC Wildlifer



Snowy mountain view in Marion.  
Photo Courtesy Kelsey Pistner.

## At a glance:



### Annual Meeting

Flyfishing at a Waterfall.  
Photo Courtesy Clint Barden.



### Officer Elections

Candidate David Mattocks  
poses with fish.



### #ExploreNC!

An Elk in Cataloochee. Photo  
Courtesy Niya Friday.



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## NCTWS Executive Board

Position	Officer Name	Phone	Email
Past President	Danny Ray	336-212-3496	swampcollie03@hotmail.com
President	Gabriela Garrison	910-409-7350	gabriela.garrison@ncwildlife.org
President-elect	Rada Petric	336-419-8930	rpetric@unc.edu
Treasurer	Justin McVey	828-273-7980	justin.mcvey@ncwildlife.org
Secretary	Liz Hillard	217-840-4613	liz@wildlandsnetwork.org
At-large Board	Liz Rutledge	919-833-1923	liz@ncwf.org
At-large Board	David Mattocks	336-456-3929	dmmattoc@gmail.com
SE Section Rep.	Kelsey Pistner	910-368-3654	kelseynciolepistner@gmail.com



# President's Column

## **GABRIELA'S GREETINGS BY GABRIELA GARRISON**

I hope this newsletter finds you well and comfortably settled into the new year. If you're like me, you are scratching your head, wondering how 2023 vanished so quickly. That seems to be the typical pace, so I try to appreciate each day from start to finish as it's often gone in the blink of an eye.



Gabriela Garrison in Person County.

Even though I look forward to the spring and all the fun activities it tends to bring, I also enjoy the winter and the associated brisk weather. My yard is still bustling with activity, and even now as I write this, I'm trying to figure out what has drawn the attention of so many black vultures in the woods behind my house. I'll be bundling up for the frigid weather that is on tap for the next few days...but not planning on getting attached to my hat and scarf as 60-degree days appear to be on the horizon. North Carolina weather certainly keeps us on our toes. There seem to be a lot of events planned for the coming months – calendars are getting full. But most importantly, I hope you have marked your calendar and plan to join us for our annual meeting in Black Mountain. We will be at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly from April 2 – 4. Our Program Committee has



# President's Column

planned an exciting meeting highlighting the topic of 'Partnerships in Conservation for At-risk Species'. Not only is the venue situated in a beautiful location, but the speakers and presentations are diverse, and the field trips will be fun. Perhaps of most importance, you will have the opportunity to connect and catch-up with your colleagues and peers. I've gone to conferences where the atmosphere feels formal and fast-paced. Sometimes it's hard to avoid that, but overall, it can minimize the experience. I've always appreciated that NCTWS gatherings having a laid-back ambiance while still allowing for an informative and engaging meeting. In addition to the line-up during the days, we will have our evening socials as well as the live and silent auctions. The auctions are a good way to pick up some great items, but don't forget that this is a fundraiser for our chapter, so feel free to be a little loose with the wallet! As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, I hope you'll reach out. We want to hear from our members and welcome the discussion. There are so many ways to be involved in the Chapter so if you are interested, let's start a conversation. Otherwise, I'll see you in April!





# 2024 Annual Meeting

**YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly  
Black Mountain, NC  
April 2-4, 2024**



Overlook of Blue Ridge,  
courtesy of YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly.

Please join your fellow wildlife professionals at the **YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, April 2-4, 2024!** This 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!



# 2024 Annual Meeting

## Agenda



### TUESDAY, APRIL 2

1:00 – 4:00 pm	Field Trips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tour of Cooperative Rx Fire Management Area</li><li>• Tour of Forest Disturbance Research in Bent Creek</li></ul>
4:00 - 6:00 pm	Registration
6:00- 6:45 pm	Dinner
7:00 pm	Social/Poster Session(7-8:30)/ Jam Session/ Icebreaker Bingo

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

7:00 - 8:45 am	Registration
8:00 - 8:45 am	Breakfast
8:45 am	Door Prizes
8:50 am	Welcome, Housekeeping
9:00 9:45 am	Dr. James Martin, UGA <i>Landscape-scale Conservation on the Brink: Complementary, Supplementary, or Toxic Partnerships</i>
9:45 - 10:15 am	Adam Warwick, TNC <i>Partnerships in the Application of Prescribed Fire</i>
10:15 - 10:25 am	Break
10:25 am	Door Prizes
10:30 - 11:10 am	Jeff Marcus, TNC <i>Sandhills Conservation Partnership</i>
11:10 - 11:30 am	John Ann Shearer, USFWS <i>Partners for Fish &amp; Wildlife Longleaf Project History Story Board</i>






# 2024 Annual Meeting

## Agenda Continued

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

- 
- 11:30 - 12:00 pm      Alex Jensen, Clemson  
*When Are You Native? Exploring Shifts in Perceptions of Nativeness for Rapidly Expanding Species*
- 12:00 - 12:30 pm      Dr. Lisa Muller  
*NCTWS SE Section Representative*
- 12:30 - 1:15 pm      Lunch  
1:25 pm              Door Prizes
- 1:30 - 1:50 pm      Kelly Douglass, USDA  
*Partnering with Landowners, ForestHer*
- 1:50 - 2:00 pm      Break/Relocate  
2:00 - 2:45 pm      Concurrent Session 1 (Choose one session to attend)
- Session A-Mammals
    - Dr. Liz Hilliard, Wildlands Network & Luke Lories, USFWS
      - *Red Wolf Program Partnerships*
    - Caitlin Brett, NCSU
      - *Using Video Camera Footage to Understand Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) Interactions with Hair Snare Sites*
  - Session B-Herps
    - Mike Martin, NCWRC
      - *Fire Ant Control in Wetland Areas*
    - Jeff Hall, NCWRC
      - *Rattlesnakes and Community Science*



# 2024 Annual Meeting

## Agenda Continued

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

2:45 - 2:55 pm

Break/Relocate

2:55 - 3:40 pm

Concurrent Session 2 (Choose one session to attend)

- Session A- Forestry/Cover
  - Katie Greenberg, USFS
    - *Shelterwood Harvests and Implications to Breeding Bird Diversity in Hardwood Forests*
  - Aimee Rockhill, WCU
    - *Preliminary Assessment of Wildlife Use of Mid- to High-Elevation Rhododendron Thickets in WNC*
- Session B- Pollinators
  - Gabriela Garrison, NCWRC
    - *NC Pollinator Conservation Alliance*
  - Laurie Hamon, Xerxes
    - *SE Bumblebee Atlas*

3:40 - 4:00 pm

Break/Walk to Drone Demo Site

4:00 - 5:00 pm

Drone Demos

- Moriah Boggess, Hollow Tooth Aerial
  - *Agricultural Drones for Habitat Management*
- Carolina Drone Lab
  - *Technical Aspects of Drones, Applications for Rx Fire, and Wildlife Monitoring*

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Free Time

5:00 - 6:00 pm

Corvid Club Social (Members Only)

6:00 - 6:45 pm

Dinner

7:00 pm

Social/Auctions/Raffles/Jam Session



# 2024 Annual Meeting

## Agenda Continued

### THURSDAY, APRIL 4

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- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 7:00 - 8:45 am   | Registration  |
| 8:00 - 8:45 am   | Breakfast   |
| 8:50 am          | Door Prizes   |
| 8:55 am          | Announcements   |
| 9:00 - 10:30 am  | NCTWS Business meeting  |
| 10:30 - 10:45 am | Break   |
| 10:45 - 11:35 am | Funding Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jessica Schmelz, NRCS<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <i>Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)</i></li></ul></li><li>• Susan Miller, USFS<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ <i>Joint Chiefs Agreement</i></li></ul></li></ul> |
| 11:45 - 12:15 pm | Award Presentations   |
| 12:15 - 12:30 pm | Closing Remarks/Adjourn   |
| 12:30 - 1:15 pm  | Lunch   |
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# 2024 Annual Meeting

## Field Trip Information

### **PISGAH GAME LAND- LAKE JAMES BURN UNIT:**

Join USFS Grandfather Ranger District Fire Management Officer Jamie Tyson and NC Wildlife Resources Commission Wildlife Forest Manager Brandon Bridges for a tour of Pisgah Game Land – Lake James Burn Unit. We will visit a Dry-Oak/ Pine-Oak Heath restoration site which has had a 40-acre timber harvest to remove offsite white pine, utilized mastication treatments, and had three prescribed burns to release oak and yellow pine. This site is heavily utilized by the public and is part of a larger fire adapted landscape along the Blue Ridge Escarpment. Tour will highlight restoration of fire adapted forest communities and reinforce the benefits of collaborative burning between agencies.

Please dress appropriately for the field (long pants, boots, etc.)

**Plan to meet at the Pisgah Game Land Parking area in front of the orange gate on Lake James Road at 1PM on April 2nd.**

You can find the meeting location on Google Maps [HERE](#).

Additional questions can be directed to Brandon Bridges at [brandon.bridges@ncwildlife.org](mailto:brandon.bridges@ncwildlife.org)



# 2024 Annual Meeting

## Field Trip Information

### **BENT CREEK 'EXPIERMENTAL' FOREST FIELD TOUR:**

Join US Forest Service research scientists Dr. Katie Greenberg (USFS Research Ecologist) and Dr. Susan Loeb (USFS Research Ecologist) for a tour of research at the Bent Creek Experimental Forest. We will visit various natural disturbances and forestry treatments, such as timber harvests and prescribed burns, and discuss bat, bird, reptile, and amphibian responses. We will also discuss forest food resources for wildlife, such as fleshy fruit and acorn production. Some of Dr. Greenberg's work will be highlighted in her presentation on Wednesday during the meeting.

Please dress appropriately for the field (long pants, boots, etc.) and bring a hard hat if you have one (hard hats can also be loaned if needed).

**Plan to meet at the Ledford Branch parking lot at 1 pm on April 2nd.**

You can find the meeting location on Google Maps [HERE](#).

Additional questions can be direction to Katie Greenberg at [cathryn.greenberg@usda.gov](mailto:cathryn.greenberg@usda.gov)



# 2024 Annual Meeting



**NCTWS ANNUAL MEETING**  
*"Partnerships in Habitat Conservation for At-Risk Species"*  
 YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly  
 Black Mountain, NC  
 April 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024



## REGISTRATION FORM

Registration must be postmarked by **March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024** for early registration

Return this form to: Justin McVey  
 NCTWS Treasurer  
 396 Ravenwood Lane  
 Horse Shoe, NC 28742

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark which options you prefer and add the appropriate \$ amounts in the subtotal.  
**\*\*Make checks payable to NCTWS\*\***

Registration includes: registration, two lunches, door prizes, socials, and breaks			
Overnight lodging includes: Registration, 3 Meals, and Lodging			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This facility charges different lodging rates for 1 night versus 2 night stays</li> <li>• Meals provided for 1-night stay (in order): dinner, breakfast and lunch</li> <li>• Meals provided for staying both nights: Tuesday dinner, Wednesday B/L/D, Thursday B/L</li> <li>• Student occupancy is double occupancy in historic rooms with 2 single beds and a private bath.</li> <li>• Retiree occupancy is single occupancy at a discounted rate.</li> </ul>			
	If staying 1 night, mark which night you are staying		
	Tuesday Night	Wednesday Night	subtotal
Single occupancy: 1 night=\$240/person per night 2 nights=\$378/person per night			\$
Double occupancy: 1 night=\$190/person per night 2 nights=\$280/person per night			\$
Student Occupancy: 1 night=\$110/person per night 2 nights=\$190/person per night			\$
Retiree Occupancy: 1 night=\$185/person per night 2 nights=\$323/person per night			\$
Meeting Commuter: Registration, Lunch on Wed. & Thurs. (\$80 total)			\$
Commuter meals (Check all that apply) (Breakfast=\$12.00, Dinner=\$20.00)	Tues D	Wed B D	Thurs B
Late Registration after March 8 <sup>th</sup> (add \$10 to subtotal)			\$
Annual NCTWS Membership Dues (\$10)			\$
Corvid Club Donation (\$25 or more) Donors-only social on Wednesday, April 3 <sup>rd</sup>			\$
<b>Meeting Registration Total</b>			<b>\$</b>

*If paying for registration by credit card via our Paypal portal, please note that there will be a credit card transaction charge added to the registration amount.*



# 2024 Annual Meeting

Page 2 of 2

## Dietary Restrictions

Please indicate any dietary restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Vegetarian, Vegan, Gluten-free, no peanuts, and other)

Please provide roommate preference and/or name (if double occupancy):  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Social Ice-Breaker Event:** We are bringing back Networking Bingo! Please provide a unique and/or random fact about yourself! The more specific, the better!  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Basic Meeting Information:

- Registration table will be open the following hours:
  - Apr. 2<sup>nd</sup> (Tuesday) afternoon: 4:00-6:00 pm
  - Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup> (Wednesday): 7:00-8:45 am, and during morning and afternoon breaks
- Tuesday night dinner (Apr. 2<sup>nd</sup>) is from 6:00-7:00 pm, followed by our social
- The NCTWS Annual Meeting will formally begin at 8:50 AM on Wed., Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup>, with door prizes and our plenary session.
- *Corvid Club Donors:* A special members-only social on Wed. night, 5:00-6:00 pm

## Silent Auction Donation

Please bring a silent auction item that will be auctioned off during the 2<sup>nd</sup> night of the annual meeting. This auction raises funds to benefit students and student chapters (e.g., awards, endowments, conclave, scholarships).

I will bring a silent auction item to the meeting: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## Free Field Trips on Tuesday afternoon, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

The 2024 Annual Meeting will begin with two free field trip options. If you would like to attend a field trip, please indicate that below.

**Bent Creek Experimental Forest** - Join US Forest Service research scientists Katie Greenberg (USFS Research Ecologist) and Dr. Susan Loeb (USFS Research Ecologist) for a tour of research at the Bent Creek Experimental Forest. We will visit various natural disturbances and forestry treatments, such as timber harvests and prescribed burns, and discuss bat, bird, reptile, and amphibian responses. We will also discuss forest food resources for wildlife, such as fleshy fruit and acorn production. Some of Greenberg's work will be highlighted in her presentation on Wednesday during the meeting. Please dress appropriately for the field (long pants, boots, etc.) and bring a hard hat if you have one (hard hats can also be loaned if needed). Plan to meet at the [Ledford Branch parking lot](#) at 1pm on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Field trip point of contact: Katie Greenberg, [cathryn.greenberg@usda.gov](mailto:cathryn.greenberg@usda.gov)

**Lake James Game Land** - Join USFS Grandfather Ranger District Fire Management Officer Jamie Tyson and NC Wildlife Resources Commission Wildlife Forest Manager Brandon Bridges for a tour of Pisgah Game Land – Lake James Burn Unit. We will visit a Dry-Oak/ Pine-Oak Heath restoration site which has had a 40-acre timber harvest to remove offsite white pine, utilized mastication treatments, and had three prescribed burns to release oak and yellow pine. This site is heavily utilized by the public and is part of a larger fire adapted landscape along the Blue Ridge Escarpment. Tour will highlight restoration of fire adapted forest communities and reinforce the benefits of collaborative burning between agencies. Plan to meet at the [Pisgah Game Land Parking area](#) in front of the orange gate on Lake James Road at 1PM on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Field trip point of contact: Brandon Bridges, [brandon.bridges@ncwildlife.org](mailto:brandon.bridges@ncwildlife.org)

\_\_\_\_ I want to attend Bent Creek field trip      \_\_\_\_ I want to attend Lake James field trip



# 2024 Officer Elections

Voting for the 2024 NCTWS officer elections is now open. Do your part and vote for your favorite candidate! You may vote online, by mail or email, or in-person at the annual meeting.

Please vote using the method of your choice:

1) Online Absentee Ballot: Vote online [HERE](#).

2) Mail-In or E-mail Absentee Ballot

Complete and return this paper ballot via standard mail or e-mail.

Email ballot as pdf to: Rada Petric, [rpetric@unc.edu](mailto:rpetric@unc.edu)

Mail ballot to: Rada Petric, 265 N 6th Street, Highlands NC 28741.

**All absentee ballots must be postmarked by March 22, 2024, 11:59pm EST.**

3) In-Person Ballot at Annual Meeting

Complete a paper ballot during check-in for the annual meeting.

## **CANDIDATES:**

This year, we have 5 well-qualified candidates running for 3 positions on the NCTWS Executive Board. David Mattocks has accepted a nomination for President-elect. Candice Moreau and Liz Kierepka are running for Secretary. We also have Seanna Jobe and Lindsey Zarecky, who accepted nominations for the At-large Board member position.

Results will be announced at the Annual Business Meeting on April 4th.



# 2024 Officer Elections

## 2024 NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY BALLOT

President-elect (please vote for 1)

\_\_\_\_\_ David Mattocks

Secretary (please vote for 1)

\_\_\_\_\_ Liz Kierepka

\_\_\_\_\_ Candice Moreau

At-large Board Member (please vote for 1)

\_\_\_\_\_ Seanna Jobe

\_\_\_\_\_ Lindsey Zarecky



Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

According to the Chapter's bylaws, absentee ballots submitted prior to the scheduled time for counting ballots (i.e., annual meeting) must be signed by the voting member. If your ballot is not signed, it will not be counted.

Email ballot as pdf to: Rada Petric, [rpetic@unc.edu](mailto:rpetic@unc.edu)

Mail ballot to: Rada Petric, 265 N 6th Street, Highlands NC 28741.

All absentee ballots must be postmarked by March 22, 2024.



# 2024 Officer Elections

## Meet the Candidates

David Mattocks

Office: President-Elect

### **PRESENT CAREER POSITION:**

Assistant Wildlife Forest Manager, NCWRC,  
Sandhills Depot, Hoffman, NC

### **FORMER CAREER POSITION:**

Wildlife Technician, NCWRC, Sandhills  
Depot, Hoffman, NC (2012-2016)

### **EDUCATION:**

BS Recreation and Park Management,  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
(2009)

### **TWS ACTIVITIES:**

NC Chapter At-large Board Member (2022-2024)  
NC Chapter COWCH Committee Chair (2023- current)  
NC Chapter Program Committee Member (2022)  
NC Chapter Program Committee Co-chair (2021)

### **AFFILIATIONS: NCTWS**

### **VIEWS:**

I have only been a member since 2017 but I have really enjoyed my experience with the NC Chapter of the Wildlife Society so far. The chapter is full of great people who are passionate about conservation, and it is easy to see that in-person at the annual meeting. I have some awesome memories from the NCTWS annual meetings I have attended. The meetings and people are my favorite part about the chapter. There have been some people I have only met once, who were guests from out of state, but who I now consider to be lifelong friends. Of course, there are also people I met through the Chapter who I get to see at least once a year and also consider to be very special. The friends I have made and the new faces I see are the reason I am involved in Chapter activities and want to contribute more. I really believe in the work this Chapter does and it feels good to be part of a team with people who are so committed to conservation and development of students and new professionals.





# 2024 Officer Elections

## Meet the Candidates

Liz Kierepka

Office: Secretary



### **PRESENT CAREER POSITION:**

Senior Research Biologist (North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences), Assistant Research Professor (North Carolina State University)

### **FORMER CAREER POSITION:**

PostDoc: 2015-2017: University of Georgia, Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, PostDoc: 2017-2018: Trent University, PostDoc: 2018-2019: University of California, Davis

### **EDUCATION:**

2003-2006: Michigan State University, BS Zoology; 2006-2009: Central Michigan University, MS Conservation Biology, GIS; 2009-2014: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, PhD Biological Sciences

### **TWS ACTIVITIES:**

Secretary and Treasurer (2015-2019), Board Member (2019-2022): Molecular Ecology Working Group of The Wildlife Society. Member of TWS (2007-current) Member of Wisconsin Chapter of TWS (2009-2014), Member of Western Section TWS (2018-2019), Member of North Carolina Chapter of TWS (2020-current). I have constructed and given 3 workshops and 10+ talks at national TWS meetings.

### **AFFILIATIONS:**

The Wildlife Society (2007-current), The Wildlife Society Molecular Ecology Working Group (2015-current), American Society of Mammalogists (2007-current), Genetics and Genomics Academy North Carolina State University (2020-current), Southeast Climate Adaptation Science Center (2020-current).

### **VIEWS:**

I am deeply passionate about integrating genetic methods with management goals. Much of my work has a conservation or management focus, from estimating population densities to evaluating control methods on invasive species. I have learned much from managers, and have designed training programs for a variety of audiences (e.g., students, managers, stakeholders) to better study design and provide realistic expectations for genetic studies. From the student side, I am active in several mentoring programs at NCSU and on the Facebook group "Wildlife Science Career Network". I wish to expand my ability to bring students into my laboratory and provide opportunities to North Carolina students beyond research experience. This opportunity in NCTWS is exciting as I hope to continue my activity in TWS at the state level. I always emphasize the importance of collaboration between landowners, sportsmen, managers, and scientists to provide realistic recommendations that benefit both wildlife and people. I regularly collaborate with hunters, fur trappers (e.g., North American Fur Auction), USDA Wildlife Services, National Park Service, and state agency managers, and enthusiastically want to create new connections with NCTWS.



# 2024 Officer Elections

## Meet the Candidates

Candice Moreau

Office: Secretary

### PRESENT CAREER POSITION:

Natural Resources Lab Technician at Haywood Community College

### FORMER CAREER POSITION:

Horticulturist, Botanical Treasures (1/2020-8/2021), Forestry Technician Internship, Forest Stewards (5/2017-9/2019), Teaching Assistant, Western Carolina University (1/2018-12/2018), Undergraduate Research Assistant, Western Carolina University (6/2017-8/2018), Wildlife Technician Internship, Cherokee Fisheries & Wildlife Management (4/2016-5/2017), Teaching Assistant, Haywood Community College (8/2015-5/2016), Pet Care Associate, PetSmart (1/2014-8/2015), Veterinary Assistant, Lenzo Animal Hospital (3/2011-12/2013)

### EDUCATION:

Master of Wildlife and Fisheries Resources, Clemson University (2024, currently attending), B.S. in Natural Resource Conservation and Management, Western Carolina University (2019), A.A.S. in Fish and Wildlife Management Technology, Haywood Community College (2016)

### TWS ACTIVITIES:

Event Organizer, Southeastern Wildlife Conclave (8/2021-4/2022), Western Carolina University Chapter President (5/2018-5/2019), Volunteer Coordinator, TWS Raleigh, NC (10/2016), Haywood Community College Chapter President (5/2015-5/2016)

**AFFILIATIONS:** NCTWS (2015-present), TWS (intermittent since 2015)

### VIEWS:

The Wildlife Society has been an instrumental force in shaping my journey as a student and young professional in the realm of wildlife conservation. Now, I am impassioned to encourage students and emerging professionals to share in the invaluable experiences and opportunities that TWS can offer. It's important to recognize that the relationship between individuals and the society is not only beneficial to the individual, but also crucial to the functioning and vitality of the society itself. What's good for the collective engagement and collaboration within our own state chapter and beyond is instrumental for fostering a dynamic and thriving community dedicated to wildlife conservation. TWS is not merely a platform we utilize; it is a community we actively shape. As stewards of our wildlife and natural resources, we bear the responsibility to ensure the society's continued vitality and relevance into the future to "inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals."





# 2024 Officer Elections

## Meet the Candidates

Seanna Jobe

Office: At-Large Board Member

### PRESENT CAREER POSITION:

Outreach and Engagement Manager, Cape Fear River Watch

### FORMER CAREER POSITION:

Shorebird Technician NC Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve; Teaching Assistant University of North Carolina Wilmington; Principal Investigator University of North Carolina Wilmington; Research Assistant BHI Conservancy and University of North Carolina Wilmington

### EDUCATION:

Master of Science in Environmental Studies from University of North Carolina Wilmington and Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Biology and Adolescence Education from Houghton University

### TWS ACTIVITIES:

Seahawk Wildlife Society Member (2021-2022); The Wildlife Society Member (2020-2022); North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society Member (2021-2022); North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting Poster Presenter and Co-Best Student Poster Winner (2022)

### AFFILIATIONS:

North Carolina Trappers Association Member (2020-2022); The Wildlife Society Member (2020-2022); North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society Member (2021-2022)

### VIEWS:

I feel passionate about all things related to wildlife conservation. Spending ample time outdoors growing up camping, fishing, and hunting instilled an appreciation and curiosity for the natural world. My undergraduate education at Houghton University introduced me to the research world, working hands-on with Allegheny dusky salamanders. My graduate education at the University of North Carolina Wilmington and involvement with the Seahawk Wildlife Society affirmed my passion for wildlife conservation. I was lucky to have many wildlife experiences both educational, volunteer, and research during my time at UNCW. Some skills I gained involved; GIS, animal trapping, remote sensing, camera trapping, and public outreach. After UNCW, working as a field tech fostered much personal independence as a scientist and researcher, and my leadership skills as an outreach and engagement manager have grown immensely at Cape Fear River Watch. Getting to serve NCTWS by being an at-large board member excites me as I would love to be more involved with the wildlife community in the great state of North Carolina and collaborate with other professionals in the field!





# 2024 Officer Elections

## Meet the Candidates

Lindsey Zarecky

Office: At-Large Board Member

### **PRESENT CAREER POSITION:**

Vice President of Conservation & Research - Greensboro Science Center (2016-Pres.)

### **FORMER CAREER POSITION:**

Director of Business Operations – GSC (2010-2016)

### **EDUCATION:**

BS Biology, Westminster College, New Wilmington, PA (2005);  
MS Biology, UNCG, Greensboro, NC (2008), Freshwater Mussel  
Propagation for Conservation Certificate (2019)

### **TWS ACTIVITIES:**

Co-chair Program Committee (2022-2023), NCTWS Member

### **AFFILIATIONS:**

I am a member of the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network (2016), NC Bat Working Group (2016), Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) (2010), International Urban Wildlife Program (2019). I serve on the AZA Wildlife Conservation Committee (WCC) (2021). I am an AZA Zoo Inspector (2015) and AZA coach. I am the liaison between the AZAWCC and the Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) Chinchilla (2021) and SAFE Eastern Indigo Snake (2022). I also serve on the planning committee for the SAFE Monarch Butterfly (2020) and steering committees for SAFE Maned Wolf and Freshwater Mussels (2023). I am a Grant reviewer for Institution of Museum & Library Services (2018) and AZA (2021). I served on the Advisory Board to the School of Science & Mathematics at Greensboro College (2016-2020), and I am on UNCG Wetlands Committee and Education Sub committee (2016).

### **VIEWS:**

I feel passionately about species conservation and I tend to steer towards the less charismatic species, the underdogs, if you will. Over my career I have worked with bats, rodents, monarch butterflies, and freshwater mussels in NC and I work with the Mona iguana and the West Indies tree boa in the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. My projects even extend to Madagascar where I study mouse lemurs. While I work with various species, typically the bigger focus is on habitat conservation. Making changes that positively impact the habitat can positively impact the target species. I became involved with TWS because I know that networking and sharing ideas with colleagues can lead to projects and life-long working relationships. Networking with colleagues and students is a wonderful way to learn about what work is taking place throughout NC. One of the best parts of what I do is sharing my passion with others. I take GSC staff, interns and volunteers out into the field with me so that they get to experience just how moving it can be to work with wildlife. We survey for mussels, trap small mammals, survey for iguanas, and muck through wetlands taking water quality measurements. I love mentoring future scientists and I try to empower my interns and staff with the knowledge and passion they need to become the next generation of conservationists.





# 2024 Raffle



## *Get Your Raffle Tickets!*



The NC Chapter of The Wildlife Society is raffling off a brand-new Yeti cooler during the 2024 NCTWS Annual Meeting. This is a Tundra 45 cooler in the color White.

Pictures and tickets 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, or 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 April 3, 2024. Winners not present will be contacted the following day.



# 2024 Raffle Continued

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

The Wildlife Society - NC Chapter  
2024 Yeti Cooler

Name of ticket seller: \_\_\_\_\_

North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society  
2024 Raffle

Tundra 45 Yeti Cooler

Drawing held April 3, 2024

Donation 1 ticket for \$5, 3 for \$10, 8 for \$20





# 2024 Live Auction

**LIVE AUCTION ITEM #1:**



Falcon attacking a rabbit. Photo Courtesy North Carolina Falconers Guild.

This hunt is donated by the North Carolina Falconers Guild. Falconry is the hunting of wild animals in their natural state and habitat by means of a trained bird of prey. This hunt you will be able to see Red tailed hawks, Harris hawks, Goshawks, and American kestrels work! Animals that will be hunted include squirrels, rabbits, and small birds.

This hunt will take place in the Piedmont of North Carolina during Fall 2024 and/or Spring 2025. The winner can bring up to 3 other people with them. Participants must be 18 years of age and must obtain a valid NC hunting license.



# 2024 Live Auction

## LIVE AUCTION ITEM #2:



Gator Ridgeway Fishing. Photo Courtesy Gator Ridgeway.

Join Gator Ridgeway, an avid fisherman, on an inshore coastal fishing trip in Northeastern NC. This is a fishing trip for up to 2 people. The location and species will depend on dates chosen for the trip and of course, weather. Some common species you might catch include Red Drum, Sheepshead, and Striped Bass. Fishing dates are flexible but will take place during the months of June, July, and August. Winners must possess a valid NC Saltwater/Coastal Fishing License. If you do not have rods and tackle, Gator will supply you with everything you need!



# 2024 Live Auction

## LIVE AUCTION ITEM #3:



Flyfishing at a Waterfall. Photo Courtesy Clint Barden.

Enjoy a flyfishing trip in Western North Carolina with Clint Barden. This trip is available for 1-2 people and will take place in the Spring or Summer of 2024. The winner will have angler's choice of wild trout, hatchery supported, or delayed harvest fishing. Lunch will be freshly prepared smash burgers from Clint Barden's farm. If this does not appeal to you, changes to meal can be made. The winner will need a valid NC fishing license and waders if wanted. Rods will be provided but you are more than welcome to bring your own rods.



# Other News

## *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.

By Colleen Olfenbutt, CWB®



# Other News

*Below is a list of Corvid Club members that have donated in the last 3 years.*

*\*indicates Corvid Club Charter Members*

## \$500+:

- CLIFF BAMPTON\*

## \$100+:

- ALLEN BASALA\*
- PETE CAMPBELL\*
- RACHAEL URBANEK\*
- JOHN ANN SHEARER\*

## \$50+:

- CLINT BARDEN\*
- CHRIS DEPERNO
- KELLY DOUGLASS\*
- GABRIELA GARRISON\*
- BRAD GUNN\*
- MATTHEW HARRELL\*
- ALBERT HENRY\*
- JOHN ISENHOUR\*
- DR. ROLAND KAYS\*
- JEFF MARCUS\*
- SUSAN MILLER\*
- COLLEEN OLFENBUTTEL\*
- RADA PETRIC
- KATIE PROCTOR\*
- SARA SCHWEITZER\*
- STEVE SMITH\*
- JAMES TOMBERLIN\*
- SHEM UNGER
- GORDON Warburton\*

## \$25+:

- MICHAEL BARANSKI
- MORIAH BOGGESS
- ALLEN BOYNTON\*
- BOB BROWN
- SUSAN CAMPBELL
- ALICIA DAVIS
- KATIE GREENBURG
- CALEB HICKMAN
- LIZ HILLIARD
- ISAAC HINSON\*
- ANDREW ISENHOWER
- MELODY KEY
- JEFF KISER
- LUKE LOLIES
- KATHLEEN MAHONEY\*
- GARY MARSHALL\*
- KAYLA MCLAUGHLIN
- JAMES MCRACKEN
- CHRIS MOORMAN
- LAUREN PHARR
- WILL RICKS\*
- AIMEE ROCKHILL
- JAMIE SASSER
- ANDREA SHIPLEY
- CINDY SIMPSON
- DENNIS STEWART\*
- KENDRICK WEEKS\*
- LINDSEY ZARECKY



# NCTWS Member Spotlight

## Susan Miller



Susan Miller, extracting RCW nestlings from a longleaf pine tree. Photo Courtesy Pete Campbell.

**DISTRICT RANGER FOR THE  
U.S. FOREST SERVICE,  
UWHARRIE NATIONAL  
FOREST IN TROY, NC**

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN  
WITH THIS EMPLOYER?**

3 years.

**CONTACT:**

**[susan.l.miller@usda.gov](mailto:susan.l.miller@usda.gov)**

**EDUCATION:**

B.S. in Zoology from the university  
of Washington

**WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?**

My father was in the U.S. Coast Guard,  
so I moved quite a bit when I was  
young. I was born in Washington, lived

in The Philippines, Northern California, Alaska,  
and Northern Virginia where I graduated high  
school. I have the benefit of having family all over  
the country (father grew up in Oregon and mother  
in Connecticut).

**WHAT OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE DO  
YOU HAVE?**

I worked in a veterinary clinic in high school and  
again after moving to NC after college. I worked  
for Washington State Parks, City of Fayetteville  
Parks, Fort Bragg's Endangered Species Branch  
and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**WHY DID YOU GO INTO A WILDLIFE  
CAREER?**

I have always loved and been fascinated by  
animals. I started college studying Animal Science  
without a clear path of what I wanted to do but I  
knew that I wanted to work with animals in some  
way in my career. I'm still not certain about what I  
want to be when I grow up, but I've had an  
awesome career for nearly 31 years working for  
the federal government (DOD, DOI, USDA) as a  
Biological Science Technician, Fish and Wildlife  
Biologist and now District Ranger.

**HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED  
IN WILDLIFE?**

Yes! My mother was an avid birder, and her  
grandfather ran a fish hatchery. My mom assured  
me that working with wildlife was in my blood. I  
loved the outdoor activities that I was exposed to as  
a kid while living in Alaska, particularly salmon  
and halibut fishing.

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

Getting to work on the 2016 Wildlife Society  
Conference Arrangements Committee was an  
amazing experience. I got to work with a great  
crew from the NCTWS and was able to travel to  
Winnipeg, Manitoba to attend the 2015 conference  
and learn from the planning teamw that put the  
2015 conference together.



# NCTWS Member Spotlight

## WHAT SPECIES OR HABITAT DO YOU KNOW MOST ABOUT OR WORK WITH THE MOST?

My first day of my federal career was spent in the field conducting red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) nest checks. I participated in RCW monitoring for well over 20 years and then branched out into working with partners to promote longleaf pine habitat restoration. I feel fortunate to have moved into a new administrative position with the U.S. Forest Service 3 years ago where I can still promote longleaf pine habitat restoration and influence how we protect and promote wildlife species.



2016 TWS Conference Arrangements Committee:  
Listed Top Left to Right: Lori Williams, Colleen Olfenbittel, Lara Pacifici, Kelly Douglass, Todd Menke, Danny Ray, John Ann Shearer, Susan Miller, and Josh Parris.

## WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FOR WILDLIFE PROFESSIONALS?

What do you think is the greatest misunderstanding that the public has about wildlife? I don't think most people understand much about the natural world and why species and their habitat are important to conserve. "What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man." Chief Seattle.

## WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES?

My two daughters are grown and are currently in college, so my current hobbies include training my dogs (2 Labrador retrievers, a Chihuahua and an All-American mutt) to compete in a variety of dog sports including Dock Diving, FastCAT, Agility, Disc, etc. I have met some of the most wonderful people from all around the country in my travels as we compete throughout the Eastern U.S. and have made many new friends.



# #Explore NC



Cataloochee Creek Split Log Bridge. Photo Courtesy Niya Friday.

If you have explored the Cataloochee Valley, you are no stranger to the beautiful landscapes, rich native history, and wildlife. The Cataloochee Valley is a part of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and features walking trails that span from Purchase Knob, guiding you along Cataloochee Divide. Due to increased traffic during the summer of 2021, the trailhead to Purchase Knob at the top of Hemphill Road is now closed to all car traffic. You will not be able to park your vehicle and explore the trail from the trailhead as the National Park Service desires to maintain the beauty of this area as well as the ecosystems present. Nonetheless, you are still able to explore the area's wildlife and historical markers via the Cataloochee Divide trail. The Cataloochee Divide trail is about 5.6 miles and will take a few hours if you decide to walk the entire trail. The hike begins at the Caldwell Fork Trail by Cataloochee Creek. As you hike, you will see Red Oak, Sugar Maple, Black Cherry trees, and, most notably, Black Gum trees. Black Gum or the more commonly called Tupelo trees are huge and tend to be hollowed out inhabiting bees and other critters. If you would like to take photos in the hollowed trees, please be careful. It is likely you will be greeted by a large population of salamanders who live under rocks and in creeks, along with an abundance of wildflowers. Personally, the sound of birds chirping guided me through the experience, and it was a delight! Take note that the hike is a long one, so be prepared with water and first aid if you explore off-trail sights. In particular, you can visit the Ferguson Cabin, which was rebuilt using the original wood from 1875, and the site provides a history of various early settlers of the land.



# #Explore NC Continued



An Elk in Cataloochee. Photo Courtesy Niya Friday.

One of the most eye-catching occurrences in the area are the elk, with a population estimated to be approximately 150 since their reintroduction into the park in 2001. After being absent for almost two centuries, the elk population has made a home both at and around the park. These majestic creatures leave tourists in awe, with male elk being over 700 pounds and 500 pounds for female elk. During my time there, I heard the elk call to one another before I could see them, and the sound of the call can be compared to a combination of a child screaming and a conch shell horn. To witness them in person does not compare to seeing them online. Due to the elk's vastness, be sure to follow distance restrictions labeled on signs in the park. If you would like to see the elk, it is best to visit in the late spring, summer, and fall as in the winter season, elk leave the meadow and go further into the woods.



# #Explore NC Continued



Black Gum Tree. Photo Courtesy Niya Friday.

## Did you know?

Did you know North Carolina is home to over 4,000 native plants and healing herbs, some of which can be foraged? Some helpful herbs during cold and flu season include pleurisy root, Solomon's seal, and Collinsonia root. Apps like PlantNet and iNaturalist can be used to help with identification. Before you explore, you should know North Carolina regulations specify that activities such as collecting from land other than your own, selling, or trading protected plant species require a permit or certificate of origin issued by the NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services. It is also illegal to take plants from a National Park or Forest. Therefore, make sure to check regulations in your region and be mindful as you forage.



# Student Endowment Winner

My time at the Jones Center allowed me to gain a lot of hands-on experience that I or anyone else that lives in an urban area may not get the chance to do. As someone that has grown up around tractors when I was younger and later lost the opportunity to drive one as I got older, the tractor day was at the top of my list going into this course. Not only did they allow us to drive tractors with different attachments, but they also provided an ATV and heavy machinery. Aside from the tractor day the list of activities that were visited during our time there was long. As a group we spent a lot of time doing vegetation surveys, forest measurements, small mammal trapping, amphibian surveys, orienteering, prescribed fire, scent stations, bat mist netting, point count surveys, firearm safety and practice, and radio telemetry. Time at the Jones Center went by extremely fast and there were plenty of memories and friends made aside from all of the activities Dr. Greene had planned for us. Not only did I get the hands-on experience, but I also got advice from Dr. Greene and Dr. Conner on the different career paths that I could take after graduation. I am extremely thankful for the opportunity that was given to me and being able to stay at such a beautiful property like the Jones Center.

By, Bailey Kenney



Evening bat caught while demonstrating set-up and use of mist nets. Photo Courtesy Ian Deery.



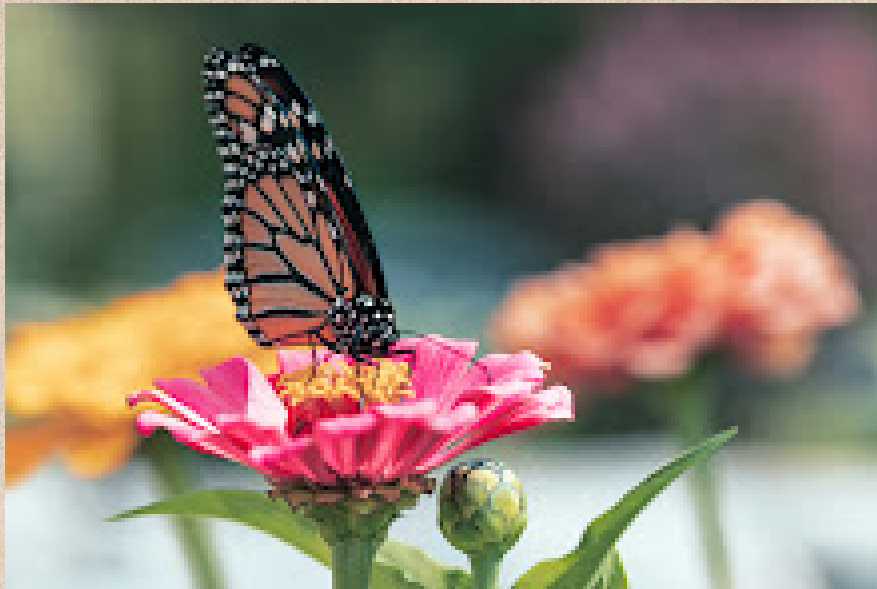
# Article

## Why are pollinators so important?

**BY, ABIGAIL KAMPSCHROEDER**

Pollination is essential to the survival of nearly every seed plant in our world. It is the process through which plants are fertilized and therefore able to produce seeds and fruit to reproduce. While some plants are able to self-pollinate, the majority of species require cross-pollination, where the pollen must be transferred from one individual plant to another.

Sometimes, this can be done through the wind or water, but many plant species rely on animals or insects to get the job done. This is where pollinators come into the picture. These animals feed on the plant's nectar and sometimes pollen grains themselves, which then stick to their bodies and are transferred to other individual plants as they forage.



Monarch butterfly on flower. Photo Courtesy Amy Lynn Grover

Bees are the most effective pollinators both due to their efficient and intentional collection of pollen as a food source and their fuzzy bodies that allow for more pollen to stick to them.

Additionally, butterflies, birds, ants, and even bats that feed on nectar can fall under this pollinator umbrella. According to the North Carolina Wildlife Federation, there are over 500 bee species, 175 butterfly species, and 1,200 moth species native to our state that aid in pollination. This list is made even longer with the addition of some wasp, ant, beetle, and fly species, as well as ruby-throated hummingbirds. While there is an abundance of pollinator insects and animals, many of these species are endangered or experiencing drastic decline in their populations.

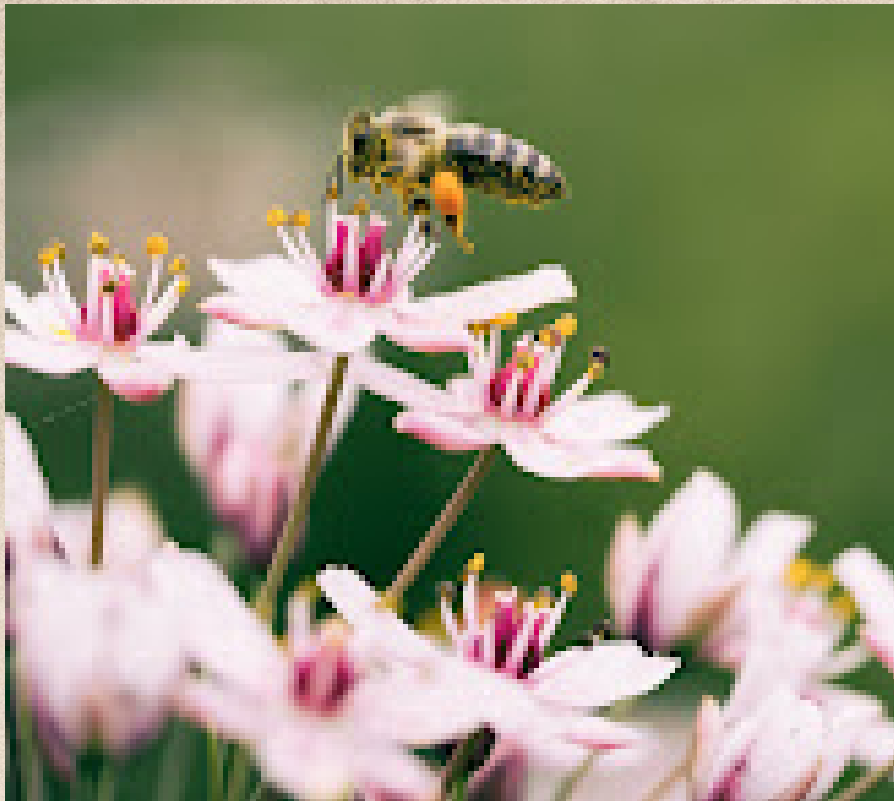


# Article Continued

## Why are pollinators so important?

BY, ABIGAIL KAMPSCHROEDER

Much of this can be attributed to habitat loss, nonnative species and diseases, pesticides, and climate change. The Federal Highway Administration estimates that 25% of bee and 17% of butterfly species are endangered across the country. The eastern monarch butterfly populations, one of North Carolina's primary pollinator species, have declined over 85% from 1996 to 2015. Without these species to pollinate our plants, we would lose 80% of the crops that are responsible for the world's food and plant-based industrial products, according to the USDA. The Federal Highway Administration states, "From the coffee you drink in the morning to the apple pie you have for dessert, an estimated one in three mouthfuls of food and drink that you consume comes from a pollinator-dependent crop." Farming alone accounts for 17% of North Carolina's jobs with over 42,000 farmers across the state. To make matters worse, a lack of pollinator species would also impact the habitats and food sources of almost every other terrestrial ecosystem on Earth, leading to decline in their animal populations as well.



Honey Bee on flower. Photo Courtesy Aaron Burden.



# Article Continued

## Why are pollinators so important?

BY, ABIGAIL KAMPSCHROEDER



Bee covered in pollen. Photo Courtesy Charlie Warl

Luckily, there are already some government-sponsored programs to help conserve our native pollinator species, including the statewide Butterfly Highway and the federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The latter encourages the implementation of pollinator plants such as native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees along roadsides, which both creates more habitats and food sources and connects previously disjointed habitats. The former is North Carolina's conservation initiative that "aims to restore native pollinator habitats to areas impacted by urbanization, land use change, and agriculture" through efforts including backyard pollinator gardens and roadside modifications. Creating your own pollinator garden or finding a new hobby in beekeeping are great ways to help these conservation efforts. North Carolina State University's Pollinator Conservation Guide has great resources on which local plant species are best to encourage pollinator visitation and how to start a beekeeping colony. For example, planting milkweed is a great way to boost endangered Monarch butterfly populations, as it is essential to their breeding habits and life cycle. Pollinator gardens may not seem like much, but with over 85% of homes in the United States having an outdoor space, it can make a big difference. Even something as small as a window box is a good step in the right direction. As pollinator species are responsible for many of our favorite foods, over 16,000 North Carolinian jobs, and the essential resources of many terrestrial species, it's only right that we give them as much space as we can to thrive.



# Dave Dudek Wildlife Award



(L-R, back) Andrew Isenhower, Dave Dudek, Shannon Rabby.  
(Front) Samantha Renner.

The recipients for the 2023 Dave Dudek Wildlife Award are HCC sophomores Aaron Eller and Samantha Renner. Both were selected for their outstanding work with the HCC student chapter of The Wildlife Society over the last year. The award is designed to recognize outstanding leadership, scholarship, and dedication to the wildlife management profession. Applicants are scored based upon their scholarship, their chapter involvement, and their record of volunteer experience with natural resource management agencies and organizations. It is named for retired HCC Fish and Wildlife Management Technology instructor and founding HCC student chapter of The Wildlife Society advisor Dave Dudek.

An endowed scholarship fund was created in 2013 after many years of generous contributions from NCTWS and the HCC Wildlife Club. Recipients receive a cash award from the endowed scholarship fund and their names are immortalized on a permanent plaque that is prominently displayed with the Natural Resources Department at HCC. Recipients each received \$400 this year.



# Other News

## *2022 Live Auction Bear Hunt Winner Darren Miller*



Daren Miller with his 210 pound black bear, taken in Washington County, NC in November 2023. Darren was the highest bidder for this bear hunt, donated by Conman Guide Service to raise money for NC Chapter TWS. Photo Courtesy Conman Guide Service.

As my wife, Michelle and I, traveled from our home in Starkville, MS to my sister-in-law's house in Greenville, NC, I considered the events that led to this trip. During spring 2022, my friend and colleague Colleen Olfenbuttel, who is the Black Bear and Furbearer Biologist for the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, called me to discuss a fundraiser for the North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society (in addition to being an outstanding biologist, Colleen is also very active in The Wildlife Society, the professional organization of wildlife biologists). Conman Guide Services, based in Creswell, NC, wanted to donate a 4-day black bear (and white-tailed deer) hunt to the State Chapter, but also wanted a guaranteed minimum bid for the hunt. As Colleen and I discussed some options for the auction, I volunteered to "start the bidding". A month or so later, I was surprised to learn that I had won the black bear hunt. Mike Noles at Conman Guide Services and I found some dates that worked in November 2023. I even talked a friend, Derek Holland from Mississippi, into joining me on the hunt. I was particularly interested in this hunt for several reasons. I am also a wildlife biologist and worked on black bears for my M.S. degree at Mississippi State University. I have always been intrigued by the species and, to date, I had only taken one black bear – on a hunt in southern Manitoba several years ago. Second, I worked as a wildlife scientist with Weyerhaeuser Company for over 20 years.



# Other News

Weyerhaeuser owns and manages several hundred thousand acres of timberlands in eastern North Carolina and has worked collaboratively for many years with NCWRC to help manage black bear populations in eastern North Carolina. I spent some time working in eastern North Carolina and was always excited to see black bears on Company property. In fact, Colleen and I co-authored an article about managing eastern North Carolina black bears on private forests. Third, the reputation of eastern North Carolina black bears, including the high density of bears and the opportunity to see very large black bears, was well known to me. All of these factors, plus being able to spend 4 days hunting new ground and meeting new friends, was a lot to be excited about for this hunt! After arriving in Greenville, NC, I got my wife settled in and visited briefly with my sister-in-law and her husband before heading to the Greenville airport to pick up Derek. We drove up to Creswell, NC and Mike and his crew welcomed us. We had a debriefing to cover how we would hunt, safety, and to answer any questions, met the other hunters in camp (from Texas and New York), and settled into our comfortable accommodations. I organized my gear and checked the 2 rifles I brought with me. A Remington Model 700 in .300 Win Mag for the bears and a Remington Model 700 in .243 in case I finished my bear hunt early and had a chance to chase deer. I set my alarm for 4:00 am and was excited to hit the woods in the morning. The next morning, I was dropped off in the pre-dawn darkness to walk into a covered platform stand nestled in a pine stand, with a ditch and a big agricultural field behind me. As the day began to lighten up and the birds began to sing, I distinctly heard some sleepy turkey noises. In spite of sitting all day in the stand, I did not see any bears, but I did see dozens of wild turkeys (one of my favorite species to pursue) and innumerable



Sunset in Eastern North Carolina. Photo Courtesy Darren Miller.



# Other News



Darren Miller with his bear. Photo Courtesy Conman Guide Service

gray squirrels (another of my favorite game species). So, the day was entertaining and relaxing, if not productive. Fortunately, the weather during the entire hunt was very pleasant – crisp, cool mornings and warm afternoons with little wind. I was happy to see that 5 or 6 of our fellow hunters had successful hunts on Day 1, and looked forward to Day 2. Day 2 found me in a new location – another platform stand, but this one bordering younger pine forest. I had a few squirrels for company but again, the bears failed to appear. After sitting all day for the second day, I was ready for dinner and a good night's sleep. Mike told me that I should sit in that stand again on Day 3 as they had several bears coming into that site based on trail cameras. I learned long ago to trust your guide, and so I agreed to go back. However, I insisted on taking a break between the morning and afternoon hunt to refocus and rest. The morning of Day 3 was uneventful, but I felt that the afternoon would be more productive based on what others in our group were seeing (mostly activity late in the day).

I settled into the stand the afternoon of Day 3 and picked up my cadence of scanning my field of view and relaxing. Late in the afternoon, I glanced up and noticed a black lump about 75 yards from the stand. I quickly realized the black lump was a black bear laying at the edge of the lane. It was hard to judge size with him laying down, so I patiently waited for him to stand up for a better view. He finally did so and, although he was not a huge bear, he appeared to be a good, representative animal with a somewhat broad head and a beautiful coat. I took my time and brought up my rifle, settling the crosshairs behind his shoulder when he turned broadside and squeezed the trigger. At the shot, the bear jumped and ran off the lane. I heard him go through some brush and then, quickly, silence settled over the woods. I reflected on the shot and felt good about shot placement, but had that underlying nervousness of uncertainty, coupled with the “after shot” adrenaline effect. I texted my guide and the guide crew soon showed up to help out. The shot was perfect and the 210-pound boar only went a few yards before expiring.



# Other News

I took some time to admire this beautiful animal, and had the mix of emotions I always have after a successful hunt – excitement, respect for the animal, and a tinge of sadness for the life taken. Of course, I was also deeply thankful for the opportunity to enjoy hours of quiet in the fields and forests of eastern North Carolina. Unfortunately, Derek was not able to connect on a black bear, but he did take a nice white-tailed deer doe to help stock his freezer. As we said our goodbyes, I thanked Mike for his support of the North Carolinian Chapter of The Wildlife Society and for the hospitality during our hunt. On the long, 12-hour drive home, I had ample opportunity to reflect on the hunt. My thoughts drifted, as they often do, to the long history of wildlife conservation in the United States that enables us to still have the opportunity to pursue wild things in wild places. Of course, this history is replete with herculean efforts by hunter-conservationists that have not only ensured the foundation for continued, sustainable harvest of wildlife, but the foundation for abundant wildlife resources that everyone can enjoy in their own way. We are truly blessed to take advantage of the legacy of conservation pioneers and to continue to work so that future generations can enjoy the same.



The property hunted by Darren Miller was a combination of bottomland hardwoods, planted pine stands, and agricultural fields. Photo Courtesy Darren Miller.



# COWCH Stories

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 an amazing story about Dr. Eugene Hester and his friend Hootie!

By David Mattocks





# Other News

## *TWS Give Back Program*

You have the opportunity to nominate a peer, colleague or student for The Wildlife Society's Give Back program and provide them with a free, six-month membership at no cost to you or your nominee. We encourage you to consider a wildlife student or professional who could benefit from a membership in our Society.

To submit your nomination, simply click the link below and enter the individual's name and email address. Your nominee will be asked to accept the offer and provide a mailing address for The Wildlife Professional magazine. It's that easy for both of you! If you can't think of a co-worker, a local or student TWS chapter member who is not a member of TWS, or a peer at another organization, don't worry. We'll follow up again in a few months to remind you that you're still eligible to make a nomination.

Sign up [HERE](#).

Thank you for sharing The Wildlife Society membership experience with another wildlife professional and for your loyalty to TWS!



# NCTWS Lifetime Memberships

**GET YOUR LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP  
TODAY FOR A ONE-TIME COST OF \$250!**

## Lifetime Members:

#001 – Kelly Douglass	#030 – Kelsey Pistner
#002 – John Ann Shearer	#031 – Rachael Urbanek
#003 – Colleen Olfenbutt	#032 – Katie Proctor
#004 – Ken Knight	#033 – Nancy Adamson
#005 – Susan Campbell	#034 – Bryon LeVan
#006 – Jeff Marcus	#035 – Bob Brown
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## Chapter Vision Statement

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

Steven Ball  
Copy Editor



Kelsey Pistner  
Associate Editor



**This Could be you!**  
Assistant Editor



Katie Barton  
Assistant Editor



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