



The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

February 2001

Message from the President

By: Gino Del Frate

I bet folks are wondering what's going on with two newsletters so close together. And if you are keeping track we didn't have much news last year. Well it has been a long hard year and we are still trying to catch up. The January newsletter was actually supposed to be out last October and so the February news is more on schedule. This year's annual meeting will be held in Anchorage on Friday, March 30. We usually look for a conference or symposium to tie our meeting in with and this year there wasn't much scheduled. However, the Audubon Society will be hosting the 3rd annual Bear Festival with an evening program on March 30 in Anchorage and an all day event March 31 in Soldotna. I would encourage everyone to make plans for the annual meeting and stay for the festival. Friday evening's event will include presentations by Christopher Servheen, Ph.D. and Richard Nelson, Ph.D.

This year's theme for our annual meeting is Strategic Planning. Discussion around planning began soon after last year's annual meeting. There have been several exchanges by executive board members regarding how money is spent and projects are prioritized. From past experiences the most pressing projects were undertaken usually by members that had strong feelings or expertise in those areas. Funding requests were evaluated by the executive board or by members present at the annual meetings. Neither of these are very efficient. The executive board felt that the time is right to begin a planning process to provide better direction for the future. We will devote most of the annual meeting to this project. The more members we have involved the stronger the document will be.

This is an interim year for elections. Only the regional representatives need to be elected. Elections will be held during the annual meeting. See below for a list of candidates with a brief description.

Wanted: a few energetic and active members.

I have decided to keep this "help wanted" section in the newsletter. This is a good way to let everyone know what needs to be done. We will add to the bottom of the list and remove items as they are accomplished (or become so outdated they are no longer necessary). For all the positions below please contact President Gino Del Frate for more information or to get started working on a project.

We still need to replace Ted Schenck who moved out of the state to a new position in Milwaukee. The remaining tenure for **Secretary/Treasurer** is approximately 1 year. Duties involve maintaining the books and making sure the membership roles are current and compiling submissions for the quarterly newsletter. The Secretary/Treasurer is also a voting member of the Executive Board.

We need to form a **Bylaws Committee** to review and update the Chapter's Bylaws. This project has been on the back burner for quite some time but nevertheless needs attention. A committee of 4 (or more) would be ideal.

TWS National initiated a project to record oral histories from some of the "pioneers of wildlife management". This project titled "**Celebrate Our Wildlife Conservation Heritage**" or COWCH is set up gather first hand information from as many of the first generation wildlife professionals while they are still alive. We need a coordinator and 2-3 regional interviewers that are willing to contact these past professionals and spend some time recording their recollections from the early days. I have one person interested in Southcentral and could use help in Southeast.

It was recently recommended that the **Conservation Review Committee** update the Alaska Chapter's position on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in light of new biological information and the current political situation. Anyone interested in serving on this committee and/or working on this specific project should contact Gino Del Frate. Thanks to Dave Yokel for volunteering. Anyone else want to work with Dave?

Candidates for regional representatives

The following candidates have agreed to serve if elected. Duties of the Regional representatives are to gather information and report on activities by members from their region. Regional representatives are voting members of the executive board. These are excellent positions for members to become active in the chapter and provide input into the decision making process. Ballots will be sent out with the annual meeting announcement in early March. The nominees are as follows:

Southeast. **Tom Schumacher** earned his B. S. in 1984 at the University of New Hampshire and a M. S. in 1999 at the University of Wyoming. Tom first came to Alaska in 1985 to work as a wildlife technician with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. In 1990 he worked on an Exxon Valdez Oil Spill study of bald eagles based in Cordova. Since 1993 he has worked for ADF&G in Douglas.

Southcentral. **Herman Griese** is currently the Area Wildlife Biologist for the ADF&G's Division of Wildlife Conservation in Palmer. He earned his M. S. in Wildlife Biology at Colorado State University and B. S. in Biology from Northeast Louisiana University. Herman came to Alaska with the U. S. Army and began work with ADF&G in 1981 and has been in Palmer since 1990. Herman has been a member of TWS since 1975.

Northern. **Tom Paragi** currently works for ADF&G in Fairbanks as a wildlife biologist. His bio was not available at the time of printing.

Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society

2001 Annual Meeting
and Strategic Planning
March 30, 2001

Submitted by Gino Del Frate.

This year's annual meeting will be held March 30 at the Rabbit Creek Rifle Range Classroom in Anchorage. The format of this year's meeting will be different than those of the past. The meeting will focus primarily on strategic planning for the Chapter. This is an important exercise that all members should take part in and give us your ideas.

In addition to the planning workshop we have a wide range of business items to discuss. Highlights will include a presentation by the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau on how they can assist the Chapter if we choose to host the National annual meeting. This topic was discussed at the meeting in Fairbanks and at the time we felt that interest from members was lukewarm at best. However, since the meeting will more than likely be held in Anchorage it was important to get the input from members that live in Anchorage and would be the ones called on to serve.

Plans for the annual meeting and agenda items are just materializing. If anyone feels they would like to address the membership or have additional items please have those to me by March 1. Look for a mailing soon after with ballots for regional representatives and a draft agenda for the annual meeting.

News from the North

By Dave Yokel

News bits from Kotzebue: The Western Arctic Herd Caribou Working Group met Jan 17-18, 2001, to discuss disease in the herd and review the management plan. There have been many arctic and red foxes along the northwest coast this year, and a high incidence of rabies. No moose counts were conducted in Unit 23 during fall, 2000, due to poor weather.

The Bureau of Land Management's Northern Field Office (NFO) is establishing a Research and Monitoring Team to advise NFO management on the adequacy and effectiveness of its mitigation measures to protect surface resources and uses in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska during petroleum exploration and development. Many of those mitigation measures were developed to protect wildlife and their habitats. Members of the Team will come from federal, state and borough governments, environmental organizations, the oil industry, academia and the public at large. Nominations will be accepted following an announcement in the Federal Register in February 2001.

TWS Support of Symposia and Conferences. As a means of implementing its goals and objectives, The Wildlife Society traditionally has cosponsored conferences. Since 1985, the Society has budgeted \$5,000 annually to support conferences and other scientific/technical meetings of international, national, or regional emphasis that are intended to advance the science and art of wildlife management, and are consistent with the purposes and objectives of The Wildlife Society. Proposals must be submitted well in advance (at least six months) and the

maximum award for any conference is \$1,000. The TWS *Support of Symposia and Conferences Committee*, on which Anne Morkill represents Alaska, will evaluate proposals for financial support. For more information on applying for conference support, including application content and decision criteria, please contact Anne by e-mail at amorkill@att.net or call 907-490-2612, or visit the TWS web site at <http://www.wildlife.org/support.html>.

Also from ANWR. David Payer will fill the position of Ecological Program Coordinator for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

News from Southcentral

Submitted by Herman Griese

Kodiak Bear-Management Plan: Cindi Loker, wildlife planner for Region II ADF&G, is coordinating a public process to develop a bear management plan for the Kodiak Archipelago. The plan will address numerous issues, including economics, safety, recreation, and environment. The initial step in the process involved convening an intergovernmental planning group (IPG) comprising those agencies with land-or resource-management authority on Kodiak. The IPG includes representatives from the Kodiak Island Borough, City of Kodiak, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Coast Guard, ADF&G, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Koniag Inc. and six native communities (both city and tribal councils) on the archipelago. A 12-member public citizens advisory committee (CAC) was selected by the IPG. Nominations were made by interest groups and by the public. The CAC began its series of seven or eight 2-day meetings in Kodiak beginning January 8–9. It is anticipated the planning process will be completed and a draft plan available for public review in April. Once

the plan is complete, the IPG will reconvene to create a strategy for implementing its recommendations. Contact Cindi Loker for more information or visit the ADF&G web site: <http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/wildlife/geninfo/planning/kodiakbb.htm>.

The revised Chugach National Forest plan and draft environmental impact statement ended its ninety day review period December 14.

Personnel changes: **Dan Esler** has left USGS-BRD to take a joint position with Canadian Wildlife Service and Simon-Frazier University in Vancouver. **Mark Masteller** left ADF&G, Wildlife Conservation Division to pursue a new career as an executive director for ACAT, a local non-profit organization. **Thomas McDonough**, a recent graduate of U of AK, Fairbanks, filled Mark's position with ADF&G as the assistant Area Biologist in Palmer. **Lorrie Rea** joined the Marine Mammal harbor seal project with ADF&G in Anchorage. **Tom Stephenson** was promoted to Director of the ADF&G Moose Research Center on the Kenai. **Lowell Suring** has accepted a position with the USDA Rocky Mountain Research Station, FSL in Boise, Idaho (208) 373-4340. **Jerry Belant** has left Denali NP to join the staff at Pictured Rock National Lake Shore in the UP of Michigan. **Carl Mitchel** has left Wrangle-St. Elias NP to USFWS at Grays Lake NWR in Idaho.

News from Southeast

Southeast Region Tom Schumacher

Unit 4 Brown Bear Committee. At its November 2000 meeting the Alaska Board of Game endorsed a management strategy for part of Southeast Alaska (Admiralty, Baranof, and Chichagof islands) brown bears. The strategy was developed by the Unit 4 Brown Bear Management Team, a

15-member citizens' and agency advisory team that met from January 1999 - April 2000. Among the team's recommendations are those setting annual human-caused mortality guidelines (4% for all bears, 1.5% for females), a cap on nonresident hunters and a reduction in number of hunting guides over the long term, comments on the US Forest Service commercial recreation outfitter/guide capacity analysis, and a proposal for managing areas to accommodate both hunting and viewing of bears. The complete text of the Unit 4 team's management strategy can be found on the ADF&G website at: <http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/FISH.GAME/wildlife/geninfo/planning/u4sum.html>. A hard copy is available from Tom Paul at ADF&G (907) 465-4358, or email at tom_paul@fishgame.state.ak.us

Etolin Elk. In March 2001 ADF&G biologist, Matt Kirchhoff and Petersburg area biologist, Rich Lowell, will initiate a pilot study to estimate elk numbers on Etolin Island. Elk were transplanted to Etolin in 1987, but dense forest cover has frustrated attempts to count elk or assess demographics. Matt and Rich will be using an experimental passive mark recapture technique. While concentrated in wintering areas elk will be passively collared by hanging break-away snare collars on heavily used trails. Once a sufficient number of animals are collared, one or more recapture sessions using passive telemetry recording stations along elk trails will be initiated. For more information contact Matt Kirchhoff (465-4328) or Rich Lowell (772-3801).

Tongass Forest Plan Evaluation. ADF&G biologist Tom Schumacher is leading an effort to develop a conceptual plan to evaluate whether the conservation measures in the Tongass Forest Plan are likely to sustain wildlife populations in the future. Using this planning exercise we

hope to develop ways to assess whether the system of old growth reserves, partial cuts, 500 foot riparian buffers, and 1000 foot shoreline buffers will maintain viable, well distributed, and useable populations of terrestrial wildlife on the Tongass. ADF&G will convene several interagency workshops and meetings to gather ideas with the goal of completing a plan by late-April. Study plans and monitoring activities will then be developed based on this conceptual model. For more information contact Tom Schumacher (465-4346).

Scoter Study. In February, ADF&G waterfowl biologist, Dan Rosenberg, in cooperation with the North American Sea Duck Joint Venture (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, and others), will begin field work on a study of white-winged scoters in Southeast Alaska. Scoters winter in Southeast, and their numbers have declined since the 1950's. Little is known about where these birds breed, and preliminary information indicates that heavy metals or organo-chlorine compounds may play a role in their decline. Rosenberg hopes to capture 25 adult birds from which to evaluate blood samples for exposure to contaminants. He will also fit 15 birds with satellite transmitters to monitor movements on the wintering grounds and to learn where they breed. Initial fieldwork will be conducted in Berners Bay, north of Juneau. To follow the progress of this study log on to the ADF&G web site.

<http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/FISH.GAME/wildlife/duck/scoter/surf.html>.

Flying Squirrel Study. Winston Smith, research biologist at the U.S. Forest Service Forestry Sciences Lab in Juneau, recently completed fieldwork on a 3-year study of northern flying squirrels on Prince of Wales Island. One purpose of this research was to investigate the potential effects of timber harvest on this island endemic sub-specie. Northern flying squirrels are strongly

associated with old-growth forest elsewhere. Preliminary results indicate that squirrels occur at a higher density than anticipated. Also, squirrels were found in roughly equal densities in both large spruce-hemlock forest and small mixed conifer forest, but source-sink issues and the relative quality of these two habitats has yet to be evaluated.

Moving On. Long time Forest Service wildlife biologist at the Ketchikan Ranger District, Mike Brown, left the state this winter to take a job with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Illinois.

Annual Conference of Northwest Section/Alberta Chapter, TWS in 2001 Update

Anyone interested in attending the Northwest section meeting should make plans soon. **Dates** are March 2-4, 2001 (inclusive—beginning with registration on late morning Friday, and ending with a final plenary session on Sunday afternoon). The **location** is Banff town site in Banff National Park, Alberta. The **venue** is the Banff Park Lodge. We are planning plenary sessions on “Emerging Issues in Fisheries and Wildlife Management for the New Millennium”, including the effects of global climate change on fisheries and wildlife populations, and the use of thresholds in our discipline. We will also have contributed papers on the usual diversity of topics in wildlife research and management.

For further information, please contact the conference coordinator (and president-elect for the Alberta Chapter, The Wildlife Society), **Mr. Arlen Todd**. Arlen’s e-mail address is arlen.todd@gov.ab.ca. We are looking forward to seeing you in Banff in early March. Both the location and the venue are highly attractive; skiing should

be excellent too!

Annual Meeting 2002

By Tom Paragi

I proposed that we follow what Maine had done in the late 1980s and early 1990s: joint meetings of local/state chapters of the SAF, The Wildlife Society (TWS), and American Fisheries Society (AFS). The purpose would be to find some consensus on operational definitions that would be needed to bring concepts of ecosystem management closer to reality in both coastal and boreal forest. A joint conference of 1-2 days could bring together statewide professionals for presentations, panels, and dialog on planning and forest management at the landscape scale, maintaining ecosystem structure and function for biological diversity, and working with society to define management objectives. Following the conference, a smaller group of Interior members of these professions (and interested members of the public) could hold a 1-2 day workshop that focuses on operational guidelines for boreal forest in the Tanana Valley (north of the Alaska Range), which contributes the majority of timber harvest in the Interior. I suggest that the proposed follow-up workshop should have topic sessions of $\geq 50\%$ discussion with consensus points as desired outcomes from each session.

The Yukon River Chapter of Alaska SAF meets monthly during September to May and will host the statewide SAF meeting in 2002 (early May). I propose that TWS and AFS consider joining SAF in Fairbanks for this meeting. Each society has an annual business meeting, but we could schedule those to occur before the joint meetings. Presidents of the TWS and AFS Alaska chapters liked the idea of a joint professional meeting, as did the Alaska SAF statewide chair and members of the SAF Yukon River Chapter at their 18

January 2001 meeting. If you have suggestions for topics, please contact me by 30 June 2001. (editor's note: we will discuss this event at our annual meeting in Anchorage on March 30)

Tom Paragi, ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation, Fairbanks. Phone 907-459-7327 email Tom_Paragi@fishgame.state.ak.us,

Newsletter by Email

As a cost savings measure members at the 2000 annual meeting agreed that sending newsletters and other distributions by email to those with email addresses would be advantageous. President Gino Del Frate agreed to have Ted Schenck develop an email list for this purpose. Ted may have started that project but unfortunately took the list with him. We will again try to create and maintain an email list of members and will send notifications out by email. We will obtain an updated list from National and begin sending correspondence out with updates on the annual meeting. If you would NOT like to get your information in this format notify Gino Del Frate and he will have your name removed. Likewise if you do want your name on the email list but your email address has changed, notify us by sending a brief message and your address will be updated. Email correspondence should go to gino_delfrate@fishgame.state.ak.us.