



The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

September 2004

Highlights In This Issue:

News from across the state.

Draft position statement on bear management (comments due Oct 1).

TWS opposes BLM's preferred alternative in NE National Petroleum Reserve--Alaska.

Criteria for Chapter Position Statement Requests (comments due Oct 15).

Message from the President

At the 2004 Annual NW Section Conference and the Alaska Chapter meeting, I assumed the responsibility of Alaska Chapter President. Upon receiving the symbolic gavel, I managed to mumble some not-so-inspiring words and created several new Robert's-Rules of Order. Despite these anxieties, I left Girdwood confident. Why? Because I enjoyed the dialogue on methods, results and management implications of current wildlife science in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest; accepted the challenge for the Chapter to become more active, visible, and effective; and witnessed enthusiasm at what I anticipated was to be a mundane business meeting.

In the time I set aside to write this commentary, I decided I should review the literature (always a sure bet) to gauge an effective commentary; thus, I read the President's Podium, *The Wildlifer*; President's Message, *Northwest Wildlifer*; and Message from the President, *The Alaskan Wildlifer*. I share the feelings expressed by these authors in being pleased, honored, privileged, and excited at this opportunity. However, the Alaska Chapter does not revolve around the President. The productivity and effectiveness of the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society, like any professional society, is dependent upon its membership. In the past 4 months, Chapter members have drafted comments addressing two issues of national importance. Progress on the Chapter's website, membership, and the 2005 annual meeting has also occurred. A brief review of these activities follows:

Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska: An ad hoc committee was formed to review and submit comments on the draft amendment to the Northeast Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the NPR-A. In scoping comments provided to the Bureau of Land Management on 30 October 2003, the Chapter recommended continued protection of the Teshekpuk Lake Surface Protection Area. Upon review of the draft IAP/EIS, the Chapter forwarded recommendations to TWS for national review. A 14-page letter to the BLM signed by Thomas Franklin, Executive Director (Acting), rejected the BLM's Preferred Alternative and recommended the No Action Alternative. You can find excerpts from this letter in this newsletter. The complete letter submitted by TWS can be read on the Chapter's website (<http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/>).

The recommendation that BLM adopt the No Action alternative by TWS was also supported by the National Audubon Society, Pacific Flyway Council, Wildlife Management Institute, Ducks Unlimited, North Slope Borough, and the California Waterfowl Association. The Environmental Protection Agency recommended the BLM maintain lands closed or under No Surface Activity restrictions as specified in the No Action Alternative. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stated that avoiding surface disturbance in the most biologically sensitive areas, as presented in the No Action Alternative, would provide the greatest level of protection (and least risk) to wildlife, and was the preferred management approach.

Draft Position Statement on Baiting, Population Reductions, and Sale of Parts of Brown and Black Bears in Alaska: Since mid-May, the 9-member Bear Management and Conservation ad hoc committee worked to complete a position statement addressing three issues: bear baiting, population reduction, and sale of bear parts. Co-chaired by Larry Van Daele and Tom Paragi, the committee drafted and revised the position statement, considering comments provided by the Alaska Chapter's Executive Board and TWS National. The position statement is published in the Newsletter and posted on the Chapter's website (<http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/TWS%20bearpositionDRAFT.htm>).

◆ Please review the draft position statement and provide comments to me by 1 October. Comments should be sent via email to eric_taylor@fws.gov or feel free to call me at 907-786-3846. The Chapter intends to complete and distribute the position statement by mid-October, prior to the ballot initiative on bear baiting.

Chapter Website Reconstruction: In addition to posting the recent NE NPR-A comment letter and draft bear management and conservation position statement, the Chapter's website has been updated to include the 2004 TWS meeting abstracts, all position statements and comment letters from 1993-2004, and the 2001 Chapter Strategic Plan. We've deleted the 1999 meeting abstracts, 1998 business meeting notes, and 2004 meeting registration materials and revised the dates and titles of all position statements and comment letters. Format (e.g., font, layout of sections) is currently being revised to increase readability and organization. Please review the website and contact Eric Rexstad (e.rexstad@uaf.edu; 474-7159) with comments or suggestions.

Draft Criteria for Position Statements: To ensure the Chapter addresses important issues and concerns that may merit a position statement, the Executive Board developed a questionnaire that must be completed and submitted prior to the Chapter agreeing to draft a position statement. The draft criteria are published in this Newsletter.

◆ Please review the draft criteria for position statements and provide comments to me by 15 October. Comments should be sent via email to eric_taylor@fws.gov or feel free to call me at 907-786-3846.

2005 Annual Meeting: The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society and the Alaska Society of American Foresters will hold a joint meeting on 21-22 April 2005 in Fairbanks at the University of Alaska Wood Center Ballroom. Please contact Tom Paragi (tom_paragi@fishgame.state.ak.us; 907-459-7327) if you are interested helping develop the meeting program and potential field trip(s) on 23 April.

Newsletter Editor: With Kevin White assuming duties as Southeast Representative, Jim Herriges has accepted the position of Alaska Chapter TWS Newsletter Editor. The position requires compiling updates from the Section Representatives and the Secretary/Treasurer; incorporating articles, position statements and other announcements; and designing/editing the entire document for electronic and hard-copy formats. Jim works for the Bureau of Land Management as a Wildlife Biologist in the Steese and White Mountains management areas. Please contact Jim if you have an announcement, article, or other information that should be included in the Newsletter (jim_herriges@ak.blm.gov or at 474-2373).

Committees and Volunteering: Tom Paragi and I drafted a short article for the newsletter that describes the process and differences between standing and ad hoc committees. We bluntly illustrate the apparent lack of interest in serving on Chapter committees.

The professionalism exhibited in the NE NPR-A comment letter and the draft bear position statement is the result of time, perseverance and dedication of Chapter members. However, these two products, in addition to the Newsletter, web site update, and initial plans for the 2005 meeting SAF-TWS represent the efforts of less than 10% of the 267 Alaska Chapter membership. Clearly, we have the capacity to be more effective in influencing wildlife policy and management in Alaska. I hope you will re-consider your current level of involvement and determine how the Chapter may benefit from your time and expertise. Please volunteer as a Committee Chair, member and/or identify avenues to improve our organization.

Past-President: Finally, I wish to thank Doug Larsen for the leadership demonstrated these past two years as Chapter President. In working with Doug as President-Elect, he was always enthusiastic, professional and fair. He also answered a gaggle of questions from me and thus made for an easy transition. We are lucky that Doug remains an Executive Board member as Past-President during 2004-2006.

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Statewide News:

[Editor's Note: The quality and usefulness of this newsletter is dependent on you, the members. Please make note of upcoming events, personnel changes, projects, or anything of interest to other TWS members, and pass them on to your section representative, by 15 November. Thanks!]

The 2nd joint meeting between the Alaska Society of American Foresters and the Alaska Chapter TWS will be held in Fairbanks at the UAF Wood Center, tentatively 21-22 April 2005 with a field trip to be arranged for Saturday, 23 April. Tom Paragi will chair the program committee, which will be composed of three members each from SAF and TWS; the initial planning meeting will be conducted via teleconference in October. Dave Person of Ketchikan has agreed to help, but Tom is also seeking a Chapter member from Southcentral. Tom requested the Yukon River Chapter of SAF consider addressing the sustainability issues in burning wood biomass for heat and electricity production the first day with an invited speaker. Management for fuel production could maintain early-seral broadleaf forest that enhances habitat and reduces fire risk near communities while offsetting carbon emissions from fossil fuel. Also, it could reduce environmental risks of transporting and storing fuel oil in rural villages. Other themes for the meeting will be explored by the program committee.

News from the North:

By Lisa Saperstein: Northern Representative

University of Alaska Fairbanks News

Terry Bowyer left the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) and joined Idaho State University, Pocatello, as the Head of the Biology Department. The position vacated by Terry is posted on the Institute of Arctic Biology's website as well as in Science and on the TWS national jobs board.

Julie Lurman has been hired as Assistant Professor of Natural Resources Law and Policy in the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences. Julie will be teaching several undergraduate classes this year. Her research includes a comparative study of circumpolar natural resource protection laws and an investigation into the RS2477 implications for wildlife laws.

On 23 April, approximately 30 biologists and land managers met with with UAF Institute of Arctic Biology faculty to address contemporary issues in resource management in Alaska. The objective of the meeting was to assess research needs of the state and federal agencies (BLM, NPS, AK DNR, ADF&G, USFWS, USFS) to determine those needs that might be addressed by the Institute.

UAF has an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) whose mandate is to oversee all research on vertebrates by faculty, staff and students. On 13-14 May, UAF hosted two workshops addressing animal care and use guidelines for research with live vertebrate animals. The first, *IACUC 101*, is offered nation-wide several times during the year and is sponsored by the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, the National Science Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It covers Animal Welfare Act regulations concerning research on vertebrates, principally in laboratory and experimental situations. On day 2, the *Research with Free-Ranging Wildlife Workshop* was held. The 98 in attendance included many participants from the previous day as well as biologists representing federal and state agencies, university researchers, and other organizations. It was the first such workshop ever held with sponsorship by these organizations. It was deemed necessary because more and more field research is coming under the scrutiny of federal regulations involving the use of live vertebrates. The workshop covered research involving fish, birds, and mammals and provided an excellent overview of issues that field biologists must consider when planning and conducting their research. The ADF&G has an IACUC and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska is working to establish a committee. The workshop was an excellent opportunity for researchers to have open discussion regarding concerns unique to field studies.

A statistical short-course entitled "Monitoring Trends and Abundance in Environmental Data: Models and Analyses" will be held at UAF 4-5 November 2004. Registration fee is \$500 and is limited to 20 participants. Details can be found at the website of the Alaska Center for Environmental Statistics (<http://www.aces.uaf.edu>). Contact Eric Rexstad (e.rexstad@uaf.edu, 474-7159) for more information.

Agency News

Tevis Underwood joined the staff of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist in June, and will serve as Assistant Manager for North Slope issues.

Harvey Heffernan, Wildlife Biologist, Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, retired in February. Harvey worked primarily on GIS projects for Yukon Flats. During his career, he had worked as a biologist for all three Fairbanks-based refuges (Arctic, Kanuti, and Yukon Flats).

Gene Peltola joined the staff of Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge last summer as a Law Enforcement Agent/Pilot. Gene's previous experience included working as a Wildlife Biologist/Pilot and Refuge Manager/Pilot at Selawik National Wildlife Refuge and an Assistant Refuge Manager/Pilot and Wildlife Biologist at Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

Kyle Joly was hired as a Wildlife Biologist for the BLM Northern Field Office on a 3-year term appointment. Kyle's primary duties include Western Arctic Caribou Herd management, Seward Peninsula reindeer herding issues, and subsistence management.

Shelli Szepanski, ADF&G Assistant Area Biologist, McGrath, resigned to begin a Ph.D. working under Dr. Brad Griffith at the Alaska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at UAF. Shelli is studying moose-habitat relationships in Lake Clark National Park and Preserve and completed the first field season of moose capture and habitat sampling during spring 2004.

Other Organizations

Kevin Hannah left the Alaska Bird Observatory in April to take a job with the Canadian Wildlife Service. Kevin was the Senior Biologist at the Observatory. Starting in September, Dr. Susan Sharbaugh is the new Senior Biologist at ABO. Susan was an Adjunct Assistant Professor and Lab Coordinator for the Biology and Wildlife Department, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. She is still a Research Associate for Institute of Arctic Biology.

The Alaska Northern Forest Cooperative held its third meeting at UAF on 2 March. Discussion topics included potential outreach efforts and technical workshops. The Cooperative was formed in 2003 as a vehicle to exchange information among forest scientists, forest managers, and forest landowners in northern Alaska. The Cooperative has a technical focus and is not a political or advocacy organization. Members include private landowners, government agencies (federal, state, and local), Native corporations, and the University of Alaska. The Cooperative will be conducting its first workshop 12-14 October 2004 at UAF on "Managing small trees in the northern forest," which includes a panel session on managing for subsistence resources. If you have questions, contact Tom Paragi (459-7327), co-chair of the Cooperative.

News from South-central:

None submitted.

News from Southeast:

By Kevin White, Southeast Representative

Harbor Seal Research in Glacier Bay:

In April, researchers from the National Park Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the National Marine Fisheries Service initiated a long-term research effort in Glacier Bay National Park focused on identifying causes of the 70% decline of harbor seals in John Hopkins Inlet since 1992. A total of 33 seals were captured and 28 were deployed with internal (5-year) or head-mounted (4-5 month) transmitters, as well as time-depth recorders (on 10 animals only). During the summer, NPS researcher Jamie Womble has been conducting real-time tracking of seals in hopes of learning more about the spatial ecology and foraging patterns of seals in the lower bay. Ultimately, researchers hope to disentangle the possible causes of decline that could include "top-down" or "bottom-up" mechanisms in addition to cruise ship disturbance, disease, and/or contaminants. Native groups are particularly interested in study results given traditional subsistence harvest of seals in the region.

Dragonflies:

Juneau biologists, John Hudson and Bob Armstrong, have been continuing research on the distribution and taxonomy of Alaska dragonflies for a soon to be published field guide for these little known but charismatic Alaskan predators. To date they have identified about 30 species throughout the state, some of which were previously not known to occur in Alaska.

American Dipper Research in Southeast Alaska:

Avian ecologist Dr. Mary Willson recently initiated a study of American dipper habitat ecology and distribution in the Juneau area. These unique, semi-aquatic passerines are known for their extensive use of rocky, high-gradient streams during the summer breeding season. In southeast Alaska, they forage on small fish (e.g. salmon fry and sculpin), in addition to a staple aquatic invertebrate diet. Consumption of sculpin is particularly interesting given that sculpins are known predators of salmon fry and eggs, raising questions about possible reciprocal effects of piscivorous diet patterns of dippers. Little is known about dipper winter ecology in Alaska and Dr. Willson hopes to learn more about this topic by color-banding birds at summer nests and following birds through the winter season. Initial investigations conducted last winter suggest that dippers may migrate to lower elevations in winter and utilize inter-tidal areas near creek mouths for foraging. To date, about 30 nests have been found and over 30 birds have been banded on 20 streams. One nest appears to have had three broods!

"Bear" attack in Juneau:

ADFG biologist Neil Barten reported an incident relating to a "bear" attack on a man in the Juneau area. This serious issue would have been the first such occurrence in recent memory in Juneau, an area with a long history of black bear-human garbage issues. Following several conversations between ADFG and concerned parties, it was ultimately determined that the man was in fact attacked by a dog named, presumably, "Bear".

SE Steller sea lion tagging study needs your help

The Behaviour@Sea Project (www.marinemammal.org) is asking for help in recovering data loggers from Steller sea lions in Southeast Alaska. Twenty-one Steller sea lions were tagged with data-loggers and tracking devices to help understand their behavior at sea. The scientific instruments record diving depths, at-sea movements, and whether animals are on land or at sea. These data will help to evaluate two of the leading hypotheses

concerning the decline of sea lions in the Gulf of Alaska and Aleutian Islands - namely the 'junk-food' and 'killer whale predation' hypotheses. Data from tags on how the sea lions behaved will reveal the strategies they use to capture different species of prey such as pollock and herring, and whether foraging on different species makes them more or less vulnerable to predation by killer whales.

Some of the data has been transmitted from the sea lions by satellite, but other data must be directly downloaded from the data-loggers, which fall off during molting. The floating devices are expected to wash ashore anywhere from Northern Lynn Canal and Frederick Sound to Glacier Bay and the outer coast.

Although boats and planes will be used in August to locate tags, all may not be found. Mary-Anne Lea and Ben Wilson (bas@zoology.ubc.ca, 604-822-9111 or 907-789-6037) are asking for assistance from other field researchers to find and return data-loggers. *Please do not approach any sea lions on rookeries, haul-outs or elsewhere.*



2004 Alaska Chapter TWS Meeting Minutes:

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by President, Doug Larsen, at 12:00 on Monday, May 3, 2004 and a quorum of Executive Board members was present. Doug introduced the present members of the Executive Board: Past President, Gino Del Frate; President-Elect, Eric Taylor; Secretary/Treasurer, Jackie Kephart; Northern Regional Representative, Tom Paragi; Southcentral Regional Representative, Herman Griese; and Southeast Regional Representative, Tom Schumacher; as well as Newsletter Editor, Kevin White. All Executive Board members were present.

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda for the 2004 meeting was approved, with the addition of Predator Management, Bear Management, and Electronic Newsletter under "New Business."

3. Approval of Minutes-April 9, 2003 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting minutes from 2003 were included in the handout and were approved as written.

4. Treasurer's Report

a. Financial statement

Beginning Balance 1 January 2003:

Regular Checking Account	1667.98
Savings	<u>5801.70</u>
Subtotal	7469.68

Income between 1 January and 31 December 2003:

Regular Checking Account	12498.60
Conference Sub Account	150.00
Savings	<u>37.80</u>
Income Subtotal	12686.40

Expenditures between 1 January and 31 December 2003

Regular Checking Account	(11091.10)
Conference Sub Account	<u>(113.25)</u>
Expenditure Subtotal	(11204.35)

Balance as of 31 December 2003:

Regular Checking Account	3075.48
Conference Sub Account	36.75
Savings	<u>5839.50</u>
<u>Total Account Balances as of 31 December 2003</u>	8951.73

2004 Account Balances To Date

Regular Checking Account	4373.37
Conference Sub account (Caribou Workshop)	10267.06
Savings Account	5846.78
<u>Total Account Balances as of 27 April 2004</u>	20487.21

- b. Discussed moving money to a CD account in hopes of better interest rates. No action was taken.
- c. Newsletter costs for 2003 were \$800 including printing and postage costs.
- d. A total of 127, including 23 students, attended the 2004 Conference. Of these, 106 attended the banquet.
- e. Awarded \$900 in student travel grants; \$800 to UAF students and \$100 to UAS student. No students from southcentral Alaska.
- f. Election results for President-Elect are 30 for Tom Paragi. For Tara Wertz for Secretary/Treasurer there were 33 votes.
- g. Have left over abstract books for sale for \$5 to recover printing cost.

5. Old Business

- a. 2006 National meeting will be in Anchorage during September 22-28. National TWS takes care of arranging hotel room space and the local chapter is responsible for sponsoring photo contests, activities around town, etc. Twelve subcommittees are needed. That means 24 chairs and co-chairs for all committees. Committee sign up sheets are located in the poster display room.
- b. Conserving Our Wildlife Conservation Heritage (COWCH) through videotaped interviews. Ellen Campbell has completed interviews with Sig Olson and Jim Kking in Juneau. Others are encouraged to contact Ellen if they are able to video/interview other wildlife professionals in their communities. A sample video and questions are available from Ellen upon request. Ellen was unable to attend the Chapter's annual meeting.
- c. A revote on Regional Representatives was necessary because bylaws state that member can only vote for representative for the area in which they reside. Ballots were distributed and turned in to Jackie Kephart at end of annual meeting.
- d. Herman Griese was presented an Award of Appreciation for his hard work on this year's meeting.

6. Installation of New President

Doug Larsen handed the President's gavel over to Eric Taylor, the Chapter's new President. Doug becomes the Chapter's Past-President.

7. New Business

- a. *Steady State Economy Position Statement*: Six of the 7 Executive Board members reviewed the proposed position statement and could not support it as written. This decision was passed on to National. President Eric Taylor asked for broader review by sending copies to members. Comments can be sent to Eric via email. The position statement is in the newsletter and on National's website. Eric will see if Eric Rexstad can put it on the AK Chapter web site.
- b. *NPR-A*: In 2003, the Executive Board provided scoping comments on BLM's proposed amendment of the Northeast NPR-A Activity Plan. Comments reflected Chapter concerns about potential impacts of oil exploration on arctic habitats and wildlife. 87% of land (4.6 million acres) was made available for leasing. The large lake region near Teshekpuk Lake contains the most important goose molting area in the Arctic and provides breeding, staging, and brood-rearing habitat for hundreds of thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds. The area also provides calving and insect-relief habitat for the Teshekpuk Lake caribou herd and is extremely important for subsistence. Bluffs adjacent to the Colville River provide some of the most important raptor nesting habitat for peregrines, rough-legged hawks, and gyrfalcons in North America. Roger Post would like chapter to pursue. Dave

Yokel said the draft amendment is not out yet but could be soon. Dick Shideler would like chapter to review because mitigation measures could be dropped from process. John Schoen was recently involved in looking at Teshekpuk biological values and said the Chapter should respond to EIS, once it becomes available. Once released, there will be a 60-day comment period. President Taylor asked if anyone opposed the Chapter looking into this. This was approved by voice vote.

c. *Tangle Lakes Mining Issues*: Bob Tobey asked about Tangle Lakes mining district and how we get comments in about conservation issues associated with land uses. Bob said he would follow up with the EB.

d. *TWS Council Report*: Normally handled by Wini Kessler who wasn't able to be at annual meeting.

e. *Predator Management*: Brought up by Vic Van Ballenberghe. AK Chapter has dealt recently with 4 different position statements: wolf management, legislative wildlife resolution, ballot measures, and intensive management. Eric Taylor asked whether chapter should look at predator management again. Tara Wertz said she would need to review the Chapter's statements before deciding. Julie Maier supports the Chapter getting involved in predator management issues. Valanne Glooschenko suggested that we ensure we have defensible data with which to develop position statements. Eric said he'd make a request back to Vic asking for his concerns and draft statement be submitted to for the Chapter's consideration. Dave Klein suggested we have an American Fisheries Society liaison to work with us on issues such as bear management. Todd Rinaldi asked if there was a liaison to release this info. John Schoen said press release should go to head of BLM, USFWS, etc. and copy all agency leaders. Tom Paragi volunteered to be liaison between TWS and both the AFS and the Society of American Foresters. Kim Titus commented on Senate Bill 297 submitted by Senator Seekins. It passed out of 2 Senate committees, but may not make it out of other committees before end of session.

f. *Bear Management*: International Bear Management Committee and ADFG have position statements. Executive Board should look at these and offer feedback to the Legislature. Kim Titus will serve as liaison to ADF&G Deputy Commissioner Wayne Regelin on predator management issues. Todd Rinaldi suggested that a TWS representative attend Board of Game meeting where predator management is discussed. Voice vote taken and motion passed for the Executive Board communicating with Titus and Regelin on bear baiting and the bear policy position adopted at Board of Game at its meeting in March 2004.

g. *Electronic Newsletter*: Most members felt they would rather have electronic version. Tara Wertz said newsletter could then be posted on web site. Dave Yokel said the electronic version will allow "Policy and Review Committee" to more quickly review issues that need a timely response. There can be a hot link on web site to newsletter so that no attachment would be needed, reducing chances for virus infection. Could have a hyperlink style of delivery. Motion passed by voice vote.

8. Next meeting

a. It will be in Fairbanks. Tom Paragi volunteered to serve as program chair. The Chapter teamed up with SAF at the last Fairbanks meeting, which worked very well. Motion to follow the same model for the 2005 meeting passed by voice vote. Tom will approach SAF with an invitation to meet jointly in Fairbanks at an agreeable time during Spring 2005.

9. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 2:15pm.

DRAFT

6 SEPTEMBER 2004

THE ALASKA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY POSITION STATEMENT ON

BAITING, POPULATION REDUCTIONS, & SALE OF PARTS OF BROWN AND BLACK BEARS IN ALASKA

The Wildlife Society is an international, nonprofit, scientific, and educational organization of wildlife research, management, and enforcement professionals. Since its formation in 1937, the Society has been dedicated to sound stewardship of wildlife resources and the environments upon which wildlife and humans depend. The Alaska Chapter is an affiliate organization and currently represents over 250 wildlife professionals living and working in Alaska. Members of the Alaska Chapter share The Wildlife Society's mission to conserve diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure wise use of wildlife resources for the benefit of society.

These position statements address three issues important to the management of brown and black bears in Alaska: (1) Baiting as a harvest method; (2) Bear population reduction to enhance ungulate populations; and, (3) Sale of bear parts.

The following principles underlie these three positions:

- Bears are important components of the Alaskan ecosystem and must be managed in concert with other species on a scientific basis with consideration given to the widest possible range of users.
- Distinctive life history traits of bears present particular challenges for managers, including: a relatively low reproductive potential compared to other large mammals; the potential for high human-caused mortality; the difficulty and expense of accurately estimating bear populations; and, cultural significance to many people.
- Wildlife management must implement methods that do not threaten the long-term survival of a population or species or inhibit the integrity of the ecosystem(s) supporting it.

1. The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society opposes baiting bears as a standard harvest technique.

- Bear baiting is inconsistent with accepted protocols to minimize bear-human conflicts that include: a prohibition of feeding bears; residential and commercial waste management; and seasonal removal of bird feeders.
- Bear baiting is not an acceptable hunting practice to 63% of Alaska voters and 59% of Alaska voters who were hunters (Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1994).
- Bear baiting as a harvest technique is only justified when it:
 - is the sole method that meets specific management objectives for a defined area or bear population;
 - does not result in unintended bear-human interactions; and,
 - is implemented with public involvement.

2. The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society believes that bear population reduction programs proposed to stimulate an increase in ungulate populations must be based on sound science, rigorously monitored, and objectively evaluated.

- Bear reduction to enhance ungulate populations remains a relatively new strategy, is inadequately tested in Alaska, and should be viewed as experimental. Prior to implementing a bear population reduction program, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game should determine the status and trends of the predator and prey populations and the ungulate carrying capacity.
- All proposed bear reduction programs should incorporate recommendations of the National Research Council's report (1997): "*Wolves, Bears, and Their Prey in Alaska: Biological and Social Challenges in Wildlife Management.*"
- To be justifiable, a bear population reduction program must demonstrate that methods to be used will result in an increase in the harvestable component of the target ungulate population(s).
- The public should be engaged in all stages of the policy and regulatory process.

3. The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society believes that the sale of bear parts should be prohibited.

- Populations of bears in some game management units are currently harvested at maximum sustainable limits and critical demographic information is limited for populations in other areas. The sale of bear parts may create economic incentives that could result in non-sustainable harvest in either of these cases.
- The sale of bear parts, combined with limited enforcement, may contribute to illegal international trade in these items.

Please send your comments on the draft bear position to Eric Taylor by 1 October

TWS opposes BLM's proposed amendments to the NE NPR-A IAP/EIS.

The following excerpts are taken from the letter sent by TWS National to the Bureau of Land Management NE NPR-A Amendment Planning Team. This letter was based on input from the AK Chapter TWS. See the AK Chapter website (<http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/NPR-A%20TWS%20comment.htm>) for the full letter.

"Upon review of the IAP/EIS, TWS rejects the BLM's Preferred Alternative (Alternative B) and recommends Alternative A - No Action. Our recommendation is based upon the following:

- The IAP/EIS is inadequate because it grossly underestimates the potential impacts of the petroleum exploration and development to molting geese and the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd.
- The Teshekpuk Lake goose molting area, composed of wetlands north and east of Teshekpuk Lake, supports tens of thousands of Pacific brant, greater white-fronted geese, Canada geese, and lesser snow geese during the flightless molt period. The area is nationally and internationally recognized as the most important goose molting area in the circumpolar arctic.
- The BLM Preferred Alternative (Alternative B) would result in a loss of protection for 35%, 51%, 46%, and 56% of the Pacific brant, greater white-fronted geese, Canada geese and lesser snow geese, respectively, which molt in the Teshekpuk Lake region. Based on the scientific literature, including a review by the National Research Council (2003), this change in land protection status will adversely impact molting geese, particularly brant.
- Under the BLM Preferred Alternative (Alternative B), 88% of the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd's concentrated calving area would be made available for oil and gas leasing. It is not possible to reduce or mitigate disturbance of caribou during calving and no evidence suggests this caribou herd can simply move to another calving area. The Preferred Alternative will also reduce protections for caribou insect relief habitat. The resulting change in land protection status will significantly reduce calving success, productivity, and the population of animals available for subsistence.
- TWS opposes replacing the 79 existing stipulations with Performance-based Lease Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures (ROPs). Although the IAP/EIS repeatedly states the proposed Performance-based Lease Stipulations and ROPs will protect resources and mitigate adverse impacts associated with oil and gas leasing and development, this statement assumes that: 1) Performance-based Lease Stipulations and ROPs will be implemented and enforced consistently, and 2) they will be effective in achieving mitigation objectives. Because of the subjective nature of the proposed measures, TWS does not believe these two assumptions can be met."

[The letter details expected impacts to waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, and caribou and critiques the proposed Performance-based Lease Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures, before concluding with the following statements.]

"TWS is unaware of any new scientific information, methods, techniques, or management recommendations nor any new technology in oil and gas exploration, development or production since the 1998 Record of Decision that will offset expected adverse effects of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative B) to molting geese, the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd, and other wildlife resources. If TWS has overlooked such specific studies, please provide a list of references.

Thank you for considering the views of wildlife professionals. TWS appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft Northeast Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. TWS recommends the BLM adopt Alternative A - the No Action Alternative. Of the three alternatives considered in the IAP/EIS, the No Action Alternative provides the greatest protection to molting geese, breeding and staging migratory birds, and the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd. The BLM Preferred Alternative (Alternative B) and Alternative C would result in unacceptable impacts to wildlife resources."

Opportunities Missed: Serving on Alaska Chapter of TWS Committees.

By Tom Paragi and Eric Taylor

The average member of the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society pays dues, reads the quarterly newsletter, and may comment on a draft position statement or resolution. In addition, he or she may attend the annual meeting to present a paper or to meet and collaborate with colleagues. However, to be effective, a professional organization like the Alaska Chapter of TWS depends on volunteers to provide their time, expertise and guidance. The primary methods to volunteer for the Chapter are by being elected to the Executive Board (EB) or to serve on Chapter Committees. The objectives of this article are to describe the structure and function of the Executive Board and, more importantly, explain how standing and *ad hoc* committees need immediate attention if the Chapter is to provide effective professional representation at state and national levels.

The Executive Board (EB) of the Alaska Chapter is composed of three officers (President, President Elect, Secretary-Treasurer) and three regional representatives, all of whom are elected by the membership every other year. In addition, the immediate Past President serves on the EB for 2 years past his or her term, and the Chapter has a volunteer editor for the newsletter. EB members are volunteers who conduct business with guidance from the Strategic Plan (<http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/StrategicPlan3-01.htm>). The Chapter Bylaws clarify duties of the EB members (<http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/bylaws.htm>).

Regional representatives of the EB also canvass the membership and provide news items for the newsletter, including updates on personnel, agency management actions, proposed legislation, and current issues. With this input, the EB can accomplish much. However, addressing issues in a thorough, effective, and timely manner requires the efforts of more than just this small group of people--it depends on active and productive committees comprised of TWS members from across the broad professional spectrum that we represent.

Alaska Chapter TWS Committees fall under two categories: Standing and *Ad Hoc*. Standing committees (e.g., Audit, Nominating and Elections, Program) are usually active only once per year. Number of committee members and duration of appointments varies. *Ad Hoc* committees are formed in response to a specific need (e.g., developing a position statement) and remain active until the completion of a product or expected outcome. All committees are usually composed of TWS members; however, committees may receive advice or input from non-TWS members. The President, with advice from the EB, appoints the Chair of all standing and *ad hoc* committees. The responsibility of a Chair is to contact the President when he/she believes an issue warrants Chapter attention.

Last May, Chapter members at the Alaska Chapter business meeting voiced concerns about proposed legislation addressing bear management; potential impacts associated with an interior Alaska mining project; lack of interaction of the Chapter with the State legislature; ineffective position statements; and proposed oil and gas leasing in the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Members inquired about status of the 2006 TWS National Meeting in Anchorage. *Ad hoc* committees worked on the bear issues and NPR-A during the busy summer field season (see this newsletter; comments are needed on bear position). However, other issues will not be addressed or will fall short of the ideals and standards you expect of The Wildlife Society unless "someone" commits the time and energy to help. Please do not expect your 7-member Executive Board to shoulder the burden alone.

Below, we have summarized standing committees. Perhaps we should substitute "passed-out" for "standing" as we're quite confident committees don't function without members. We view this as unacceptable and challenge Chapter members to correct the deficiency.

The Alaska Chapter of TWS is comprised of over 260 members. All are eligible to participate and serve as Committee Chairs for *any* committee. Please consider taking the time to call or write to volunteer or simply to ask about the responsibilities of committees (TFP: 459-7327, tom_paragi@fishgame.state.ak.us; EJT: 786-3846, eric_taylor@fws.gov). We believe it is necessary to revitalize these committees; by doing so, the Chapter will become more professional, active, and productive.

Audit

Purpose: reviews financial records of Secretary-Treasurer once annually

Status: No Chair or members

Nominating and Elections

Purpose: recruits members to run for office of President, President Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, and three Regional Representatives, prepares ballots, counts votes

Status: No Chair or members

Membership

Purpose: tracks attrition of Chapter members when membership list is updated annually by National TWS, encourages continued membership, coordinates recruitment within profession and particularly from among students and beginning professionals

Status: No Chair or members

Program

Purpose: arranges events at annual meeting and proposes agenda to President at least two months prior to meeting date; ideally composed of one member from each of the three geographic regions to balance statewide needs and issues (2005 joint meeting with the Alaska Society of American Foresters will occur in Fairbanks 21-23 April - see this newsletter for more info)

Status: President-elect (Tom Paragi) is Chair and represents the Northern region; Dave Person is member representing Southeast for 2005

Conservation Review (*ad hoc*): reviews legislative proposals, environmental assessment or impact statements, and other issues and recommends action to EB

Status: No Chair or members

Education and Information (*ad hoc*): informs the public about wildlife issues and the role of the Alaska Chapter in providing objective information for decision making

Status: Chair: Tom Paragi; no members.

Resolutions and Positions (*ad hoc*): after EB reviews criteria questions submitted by two or more members on a specific conservation issue, this committee conducts technical review and prepares advisory language for EB and membership review

Status: Co-Chair: Tom Paragi (other Co-Chair depends on topic); no members

Conserving Our Wildlife Conservation Heritage (special project): interviews long-time conservationists who have worked in Alaska to archive a historic record of the wildlife profession in our state

Status: Chair: Ellen Campbell; no members

National TWS meeting in Anchorage, September 2006 (special project): starting in 2005 there will be several committees needed to cover the local organization details of this landmark event

Status: Co-Chairs: Gino Del Frate and Howard Golden; Ellen Campbell and Nancy Tankersley are members.

Draft Criteria for Position Statements

By Tom Paragi and Eric Taylor

Article VII, Section 5 of the bylaws of the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society (Chapter) addresses protocol for Resolutions and Public Statements (<http://mercury.bio.uaf.edu/ak-tws/bylaws.htm>). Two or more Chapter members must request a position be considered before the Executive Board (EB) will begin the process. The EB is considering adoption of criteria to better evaluate the merit of a request and determine if it is appropriate for the Chapter to form a committee and draft a position statement.

We have developed draft criteria that consist of 7 questions. Question 1 clarifies the potential issue or proposed action, its history, and applicable laws or regulations. For example, the issue may have been previously addressed by the Chapter, or an individual may not be aware of changes in laws or policies that may affect an issue or concern. Question 2 describes attempts to resolve the issue so the Chapter can fully understand and evaluate the issue. Question 3 will define whether a position should be drafted to an individual agency,

multiple audiences (agencies, government, organizations), or the public. Question 4 will help the EB to determine if an intended outcome is to better educate the public or Legislature on an issue or to provide an opinion to a resource agency. Proponents drafting a position statement request should understand that the EB will assemble a committee that incorporates expertise within the Chapter and that the final outcome or recommendations may not be what was originally intended by the proponents. Assuming the position is based on sound science and that the committee operated in a fair manner, the EB would likely support the recommendations, irrespective of whether the original intended purpose was addressed. The listing of an intended purpose does not obligate a committee to meet only that goal. The committee may decide the issue or concern is more complex than first envisioned or that an alternative recommendation is more appropriate. Question 5 will help the EB gauge the level of controversy and breadth of interest in the issue. Question 6 allows the proponents to suggest knowledgeable people, which may save time in assembling a committee under short deadlines. Finally, question 7 sets a timeframe to draft, review, and complete a final product.

Your input is needed! Please send comments on these questions and comments on the proposed process by 15 October, to Eric Taylor (786-3846; eric_taylor@fws.gov). Feel free to contact Eric or Tom Paragi (459-7327, tom_paragi@fishgame.state.ak.us) if you have questions.

Draft Position Statement Criteria

- 1) Identify the specific wildlife population or habitat concern. Please include an adequate description, including the history of the issue, and justify why the issue is inadequately addressed with current laws, policies, or management. If the issue is the result of a proposed action (e.g., legislation, change in land status), please indicate why the proposed change is of concern.
- 2) Have you or others attempted to resolve this concern with the appropriate agency or institution? If so, please indicate the organization(s) or person(s) involved, their position(s), date(s) and communication method(s) (e.g., correspondence, phone call, meeting) and the outcome.
- 3) Please list the intended audience for which this position is being written.
- 4) Please describe the intended outcome or result of the position statement.
- 5) What are the positions of state and federal agencies, borough governments, Native communities, and other organizations (e.g., National Audubon) on this issue?
- 6) Please provide names and contact information for potential committee members who are current Chapter members, in case the Executive Board determines the issue or concern warrants the drafting of a position statement by the Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society.
- 7) Please provide a date when the position must reach the intended audience and a reason for this deadline (e.g., prior to comment period).

Meetings of Interest:

1st International Symposium on Wolverine Research and Management to be held June 13-17, 2005 in Jokkmokk, Sweden. For more information, see the website of The Wolverine Foundation <http://www.wolverinefoundation.org/symp05.htm> or email Jens Persson jens.persson@szoek.slu.se

2004 Membership Renewal

Members interested in renewing their membership to the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society should send their membership dues to Tara Wertz at Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 101 12th Ave., Rm 236, Box 20, Fairbanks, AK 99701. Please consider sending your national and chapter dues directly to TWS National. This is the easiest way for us to keep our membership files straight. Our membership list is usually updated before each newsletter is sent, so hurry to renew your membership and you will continue to receive future issues of the *Alaskan Wildlifer* in the future.

Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society 2004 Membership Form

If you are not a member of the National TWS and want to maintain your Chapter membership, please fill out the form below and return it to Tara Wertz at the address below (note that Chapter dues are \$5.00 and can be paid with a personal check made out to TWS, Alaska Chapter). If you are a member of National, please continue to pay your state dues when you renew, using the form and procedure provided by National.

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Numbers-Work: _____ **Home:** _____ **Fax:** _____

E-mail: _____

Tara Wertz
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
101 12th Avenue, Rm 236, Box 20
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701