

# NEWS

## Message from the President



**Mark Ruby**

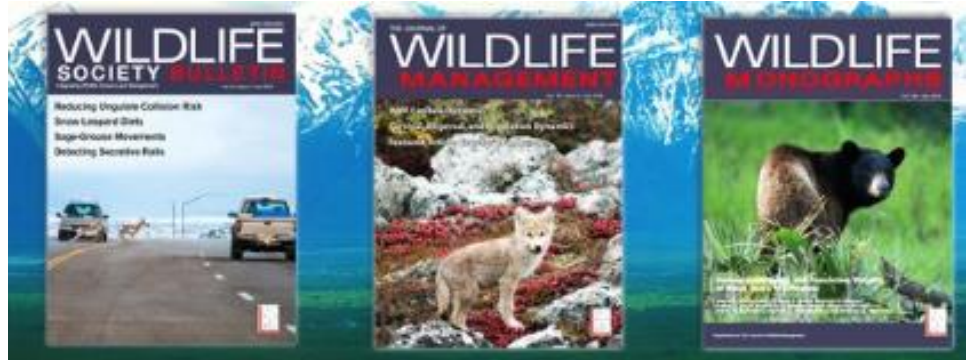
Happy Holidays fellow MT TWS Chapter Members! I hope the end of 2016 is treating you to clear, cold skies, warm fires and quality snow tracking conditions. Summer and fall are always busy time of year and winter provides me with a bit of time to reflect on the past year. I have always been impressed by how much members of MT TWS are able to do given a single season and a calendar year. On top of an already busy profession, members are consistently volunteering, advocating for better management or policy, conducting outreach or education, planning workshops, conferences or just spending extra hours coordinating with other professionals, and collaborating with partners or working with members of the public. The passion and work ethic of the MT chapter is truly an amazing thing.

Most importantly, I want to give a big thank you to the executive board, committee chairs and all the hard working members in the MT Chapter for all the work they do for the Chapter and for wildlife in Montana.

## News From National TWS

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A TWS membership just became more valuable. As part of the effort to expand partnerships within the wildlife community, all current and new TWS members will soon have online access to the latest wildlife science published in our premier journals which include:



— *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Wildlife Monographs* and the *Wildlife Society Bulletin*. Previously, members had to pay an additional \$75 for online access to both journals, nearly the cost of a full TWS membership.

This new benefit, which will start in January 2017, means that everything TWS publishes will be *free* to all members. It is yet another step toward our commitment to increasing member engagement in TWS and reconnecting wildlife science with management and conservation. The new journal benefit promotes national level strategic themes that include the conservation and sustainability of wildlife, leadership in the conservation community, service to TWS members, integration and networking among Society's organizational units and sound business management for the Society.

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## **MT TWS Board Members**

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### **President-Elect**



**Vanna Boccadori**

### **Past President**



**Brent Lonner**

### **Secretary**



**John Waller**

### **Treasurer**



**Megan O'Reilly**

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Never too early to start thinking about Executive Board Candidates/Nominees for the 2017 election. Elections this year will be held for President-Elect and Secretary. Contact Brent Lonner (mttws.pastpres@gmail.com) for additional information.

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## **Asking For Your Feedback**

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### **Considering a MT TWS Endowment**

The Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society has been serving wildlife professionals in our state for over half a century. Our roots in the wildlife community run deep, and our members' legacy of accomplishments will continue to inspire many more generations of wildlife professionals. Last year, Chapter membership crafted and adopted a new strategic plan to guide us steadily toward that future. Our strategic activities through 2018 are to build our professional development and conservation affairs programs, and to create a long-term financial plan for the Chapter as well as the description of a staff position to manage the implementation of our activities and communications.

Encouraged by our deep history and bright future, we are currently considering the establishment of an endowment fund that will provide our current and future membership with the resources needed to support the goals and activities of our Chapter in perpetuity. Montana currently has a generous charitable endowment tax credit that, when combined with the federal charitable tax deduction, makes it quite appealing for individuals and businesses to donate to Montana non-profit endowment funds (for more information, visit [www.mtnonprofit.org/endowMontana](http://www.mtnonprofit.org/endowMontana)). This tax credit has been authorized through 2019, at which time it will expire unless extended by the legislature. If our Chapter establishes an endowment, our goal by the end of 2019 would be to raise enough principle to fund the position identified in our strategic plan.

We would like you, as members of this Chapter, to consider your support for this endowment. And we are asking for your feedback as we develop the concept. Your feedback will inform our proposal for endowment development that would be presented during our upcoming annual meeting. Please contact our Chapter President Mark Ruby, at [mttws.president@gmail.com](mailto:mttws.president@gmail.com), with your comments.

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## **MT Chapter Committee Reports**

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### **Education Committee**

The education committee of the MTWS was well represented at the 2016 MEA/MFT Conference in Helena on October 20 and 21. There were about 2,000 educators from around the state that attended this conference. The 2017 conference will be in Missoula.

This was the second year that the MTWS had presenters at this conference. In 2015 we had 5 presenters and this year we had 7 presenters. Attendance for each presentation at this year's conference ranged from 1 to 48 educators. All of the presentations were well received with good interaction from attendees. Five of the presentations were video recorded. The potential use of these and videos and from the 2015 convention will be discussed at the upcoming MTWS annual meeting in March 2017.

MT TWS member presentations included the following topics and presenters:



- Sage Grouse and the Sagebrush Sea by Vanna Boccadori
- Hummingbirds in Montana by Eric Rasmussen
- Birds of Glacier National Park by Steve Gniadek
- Studying Bird Migration Using Today's Technology by Craig Kuchel
- eBird- a Global Citizen Science Project by Katharine Stone with assistance from Eric Rasmussen
- Amphibians, Reptiles and Bats: an overview by Bryce Maxell
- Migration Station by Megan O'Reilly



**Top left:** Vanna Boccadori provides a primer on sagebrush ecosystems and sage grouse ecology. **Bottom left:** Kate Stone discusses the basics of sharing bird observations with eBird. **Right:** An audience of educators listens to Eric Rasmussen present of MT hummingbird species and identification.

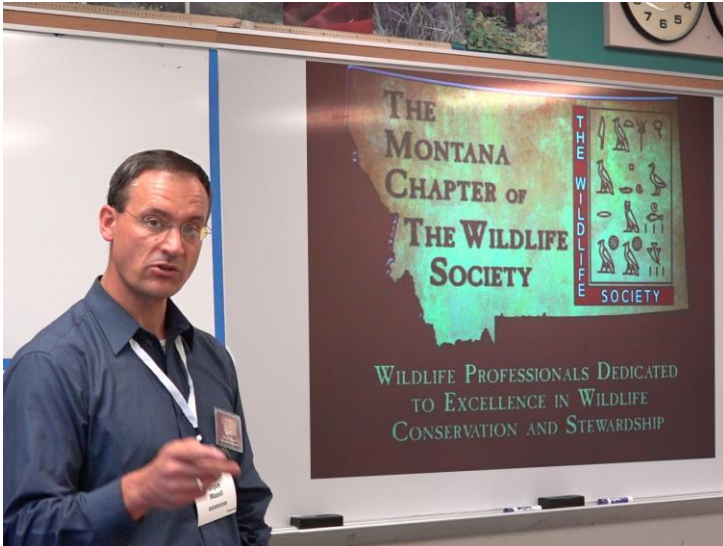
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## **MT Chapter Committee Reports**

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### **Education Committee continued...**



**Left:** Bryce Maxell presenting on amphibians, reptiles and bats. **Right:** Megan O'Reilly hosts an interactive discussion about what migration is and what types of migration there are.

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### **Conservation Affairs Committee**

As some of you may recall, during last year's MT TWS annual meeting in Missoula and as part of our recently updated and revised Strategic Plan, we officially solicited volunteers and organized our first Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) meeting. This 13 member group has been active over the last few months and is currently organized by Amy Seaman with MT Audubon.

The main goal of the CAC is to develop an outreach program to engage and inform policy makers in order to provide the best available scientific information during the public processes that establish policies and laws that affect conservation and stewardship of wildlife in Montana. As part of this, one of our main focuses has been improving and/or establishing better communication with lawmakers related to the upcoming 2017 legislative session. One step towards this goal is identifying and prioritizing conservation themed issues, such as conservation education, hunting, responsible human use of wildlife, wildlife disease, use of science & policy in management decisions, wildlife trapping, T&E species, conserving biological diversity, etc. If you have an interest in being involved with this process, please contact Amy ([amy.seamn@gmail.com](mailto:amy.seamn@gmail.com)).

We are also considering participating in a day at the capitol rotunda in which several local and national conservations groups (MT Wildlife Federation, Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation, Trout Unlimited, etc.) are on hand to answer questions and provide information to interested policy makers. This event is set for February 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have an interest in helping out or participating let us know.

Lastly, we also coordinate and communicate with other TWS state and section Chapters. The more we can communicate with our partners regionally or nationally, the better more effective we all can be. If you have interest in having more involvement with this group, please contact Amy Seaman ([amy.seamn@gmail.com](mailto:amy.seamn@gmail.com)).

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## **MT Chapter Committee Reports**

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### **Conservation Affairs Committee continued...**

In order to raise awareness of our chapter among state legislators, we are asking you to contact your state senators and representatives. A sample letter is below; it can be mailed or emailed. Here is a link you can use to find your legislative contacts by entering your address: <http://leg.mt.gov/css/About-the-Legislature/Legislative-Districts/default.asp>. And here is a link for some other ways to figure out who your legislators are: <http://leg.mt.gov/css/find%20a%20legislator.asp>

Also there is an app available for download called "Montana 2016-2017 Legislative Directory" and it is free for download on smart devices. It has all of the contact information, committee assignments, committee schedules, etc. that anyone coming to the capital or wanting to be involved should have.

You may not receive a reply from your local legislators, but if they hear from us they will at least be better informed about our mission and diverse membership. Our 2015 Strategic Plan addresses public engagement, including informing policy makers in order to build support for policies and laws that affect Montana wildlife. Your efforts will help us in that process.

Thanks for your involvement. Below is an example letter to your legislator.

*Honorable Senator/Representative XX:*

*Congratulations on your election to the Montana State Senate/House. I'm a constituent in your district and would like to briefly introduce myself. I'm a professional in the field of wildlife biology and a member of the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TWS).*

*The mission of the Montana Chapter of TWS is to ensure effective wildlife management in Montana by fostering development of current and future wildlife professionals, providing science-based policies and education, and communicating and collaborating with conservation organizations and the public.*

*The Montana Chapter of TWS represents professional wildlife biologists across the state, those working for state and federal agencies, private corporations, conservation groups and other NGOs, as well as retirees.*

*As you once again engage with your fellow legislators for the benefit of all Montanans, I want to offer my help on issues relating to Montana wildlife and habitat that may arise during the session. Please feel free to call on me if you need information or assistance. If I can't address your questions, I can contact other members for specific expertise on a wildlife issue. We are a non-partisan, professional organization primarily concerned with the world-class wildlife resources of Montana.*

*I thank you for your service to the citizens of Montana, and I wish you success in the serious business of representing the people of our state.*

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## **Other Board Activities**

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### **MT TWS Position Letter on Ballot Initiative I-177**

Montana Ballot Initiative I-177 proposed to prohibit traps and snares for animals by the public on any public lands within Montana (with certain exceptions). The ballot measure was defeated 63% to 37% on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The MT TWS board submitted a Op-Ed to state newspapers on October 28 regarding I-177. The letter was built from the National TWS stated position on regulated trapping, but written to have a Montana focus. Given the shortened timeframe for the Op-Ed, full membership review of the letter was not conducted. However, the letter in its entirety is provided here for members to read.

#### **MT TWS Board Op-Ed Letter:**

The Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society (MT TWS) supports continued regulated trapping on public and private lands for sustained harvest of species of furbearers and other non-game as an effective method of managing Montana’s wildlife. MT TWS recognizes that regulated trapping is important to many people who desire to live close to the land and take personal responsibility for their uses of animals. Further, MT TWS promotes trapper education programs that inform trappers and the public about best management trapping practices and ethics, values and responsibilities of trapping in Montana.

The Wildlife Society is an international professional organization of scientists, managers, consultants and others, and promotes sustainable management, conservation, and research for wildlife populations and habitats. The Wildlife Society’s mission is “to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation.” MT TWS believes that regulated trapping on Montana’s public and private lands is consistent with the principles of conservation and provides a biologically sustainable, safe and ecologically sound method of managing furbearers and other non-game species.

Specific to Montana, trapping regulations have been publically discussed and adopted as law by the Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) Commission for 100 years. Trappers must adhere to an extensive set of trapping rules. Regulations and quotas are based on established professional wildlife science and management experience along with data from populations in Montana to provide sustainable levels for wildlife populations across all Montana lands. Trapping can be a primary tool of most wildlife damage management programs and an important technique in wildlife research. Regulated trapping can be an important way for biologists to collect information about wildlife. This data can provide information important in understanding changes in distribution of species and the status of populations on public and private lands locally, regionally and/or statewide.

Trapping is part of our cultural heritage that provides income, recreation, and an outdoor lifestyle for many citizens through use of a renewable natural resource. Both trapping and hunting provide opportunities for fostering stewardship values and connecting to the outdoors. Trapper education to foster ethical and humane trapping practices is required in some circumstances in Montana and strongly encouraged in all others. FWP encourages all trappers to participate in the Trapper Education Program and supports the effort to make trapper education mandatory for all first-time trappers.

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## **MT Chapter News**

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### **The Legislature Migrates Back to Helena by Amy Seaman**

Here we are again! The 2017 Montana Legislature will convene January 2<sup>nd</sup> in Helena. As we have since 1981, Montana Audubon will lobby on the front line at the Capitol in our efforts to protect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. This year, as in 2015, Amy Seaman, our Associate Director of Bird Conservation, will step up as the lead lobbyist with the help of a new legislative intern.

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*Montana State Capital building in Helena, MT.*

During the last (2015) Legislative session Montana Audubon testified on 68 bills, opposing 24 and supporting 44. Our efforts helped defeat 10 anti-environmental/anti-wildlife bills, and helped pass 20 bills aimed at strengthening our environmental and wildlife laws. We anticipate 2017 to be just as much work, and with so much on the table, we are going to need your help.

#### **You can support our legislative work!**

**Donate** to Montana Audubon to support face-to-face contact with legislators and our action alert network.

**Sign up for our action alert network** by visiting [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org)\*

**Join us** for a Montana Audubon Lobby Day –free of charge, for any and all Audubon members. Come to the Capitol and participate directly in democracy. Learn about the legislative process, important Audubon issues, and help influence those making critical decisions about wildlife and the environment. Dates are set in early January.

*\*As the legislature faces tough problems concerning wildlife and the environment we need as many conservationists and Audubon Chapter members as possible calling their Representatives and Senators to encourage them to vote responsibly. When local input is needed, Montana Audubon will contact you by email, explain the issue, explain how and why to take action, and let you know which legislators need encouragement.*

We limit the use of the action alert program to the most critical issues, but they provide a powerful way to make our voice heard.

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## **MT Chapter News**

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### **The Legislature Continued...**

#### **Why help with letters and phone calls?**

**Sage-Grouse.** Fully funding Montana’s Sage-grouse conservation program staff is a major issue in addition to securing specific authorization to spend the remainder of a \$10M Sage-grouse stewardship fund.

**Habitat Montana.** In 2015, Montana legislators put restrictions on Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks’ (FWP) main habitat program, largely preventing them from purchasing new parcels. We want to remove this restriction that negatively affects wildlife.

**Renewable Energy.** We will be supporting at least one bill on the topic of Montanan’s generating their own electricity with alternative technologies like solar panels. It allows government buildings (including county courthouses and schools) to invest in solar systems large enough to save on future utility bills.



**Colstrip.** Global warming is the biggest environmental we face, threatening to greatly disrupt birds, other wildlife and human communities. Numerous pieces of legislation will be introduced on coal and Colstrip. Montana Audubon will help ensure solutions address climate change, and preserve our constitutional right to a “clean and healthful environment.”

**Clean Water.** Most of the controversy surrounding water rights focus on ‘exempt wells’ in residential housing developments. Montana’s Supreme Court recently ruled that future large subdivisions need to change the way they acquire water. Since subdivisions impact a variety of wildlife, we will focus on the numerous bills anticipated on this issue.

**Wetlands.** Montana legislators will be exploring whether to take over the federal program that allows wetlands to be filled for development (Section 404 of the Clean Water Act). State management of this permit program does not make sense for many reasons, so we will lobby to maintain federal control.

Please assist us with our efforts this year! Find out more at <[www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org)>, or by emailing Amy ([aseaman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:aseaman@mtaudubon.org)) where you can sign up to be an Armchair Activist and find out how your legislators voted last session!

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## **MT Chapter News**

### **Intermountain Journal of Sciences Status Report by Terry**

*Lonner Managing Editor*

About 4 years ago it was decided by the three sponsoring organizations of the Intermountain Journal of Sciences (IJS) for it to be converted to an on line journal or eJournal. The Montana State University Library was contacted and they accepted a partnership to help with this by providing a repository for on line search requests using a system called ScholarWorks. Search requests would fall under the concept of an Open Access platform. As part of this partnership the library also agreed to serve as an archiving service for IJS.

Recently, however, the MSU Library recommended conversion of IJS from ScholarWorks to a more appropriate program called Open Journal Systems (OJS). The three sponsoring organizations approved this recommendation and the conversion has been initiated. A Statement of Work has been approved and signed between IJS and the MSU Library's DAWS (Digital Application Website Services). This Statement of Work includes archiving and annual maintenance costs for archiving IJS and making the transition from ScholarWorks to the Open Journal System.

Open Journal Systems is a journal management and publishing system that has been developed by the Public Knowledge Project through its federally funded efforts to expand and improve access to research. It is an Open Access journal platform that works to disseminate and preserve scholarly research content. Through its management systems, its finely grained indexing of research and the context it provides for research, OJS seeks to improve both the scholarly and public quality of refereed research. Using similar search, archiving and access systems as ScholarWorks, MSU has set up a locally hosted and maintained version of Open Journal Systems to better serve IJS and increase its reach to people of the intermountain region and beyond.

Because of this conversion to OJS, the unarchiving of all IJS volumes and issues has been delayed, but is still ongoing. A Keyword identification system has also been updated for IJS that generates optional keywords that are incorporated into IJS volumes submitted to the library. It has also been decided that IJS will continue to be published in print form until all of the kinks are worked out in making it solely an eJournal.

While continuing to work with staff from the MSU Library to finalize the format of IJS into OJS, it was decided not to put IJS online until the first week of 2017. This should include Volumes 16 (2010) through 19 (2013) with Volumes 20 (2014) through 22 (2016) as the next priority. Once the most current Volumes are archived we will continue to unarchive previous Volumes 1 (1995) through 15 (2009). It has also been decided to publish Volume 22 - 2016 as a printed version because of the delay in getting IJS online in OJS. After Volume 22, all future volumes of IJS will potentially be in an eJournal format.

The IJS website (<http://www.intermountainjournal.org>) will continue to be maintained to work complementarily with the MSU Library and Open Journal Systems. It will continue to give the journal a presence on the Internet and provide a means to submit articles for publication. It is being modified to no longer duplicate the hosting of past and current volumes and issues but will provide a direct link to OJS administered by the MSU Library.



## **MT Chapter News**

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### **2017 MT TWS Annual Conference by Vanna Boccadori**

Habitat is fundamental to the very existence of wildlife. It provides the necessities of life such as food, security, thermal cover and nesting cover. As scientists and wildlife managers, we strive to understand its influence on the ecology of wildlife populations. As land managers, we use this knowledge to inform decisions on maintaining or improving quality habitat across the landscape. Variables such as long-term ecological processes, landownership, and legislative actions greatly affect habitat quality and the need and/or ability to manage and conserve it.

Natural changes in the environment such as loss of aspen, shrub- and grasslands to conifer expansion and the large-scale mountain pine beetle

infestations, have occurred across the inter-mountain west, including Montana.

These changes have focused public and private land managers' attention on habitat restoration projects. Various techniques and tools are being employed to accomplish this task and are worthy of discussion as to their effectiveness.

In Montana, approximately 70% of the land is in private ownership, providing millions of acres of wildlife habitat, including critical habitat such as winter and birthing ranges and migration corridors. This highlights the role that private landownership plays in wildlife conservation while emphasizing the impact, positive or negative, that land use can have on wildlife populations by affecting their habitat.

Public land in Montana is primarily administered by federal agencies (Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service) and state agencies (Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks) that are tasked with managing habitat, often with varying mandates and objectives. Policies and programs within each agency define to what level habitat is managed for the benefit of wildlife.

Federal legislation has a major impact on habitat management in Montana. The Equal Access to Justice Act and the Endangered Species Act have allowed for large scale environmental litigation that can cripple federal land management agencies' ability to manage our public resource. Changes in the Farm Bill have led to a significant loss of sagebrush and native range habitat as CRP acres have been converted to cropland. Understanding the significance of such legislative mandates is important as we continue to move forward managing our public resources.

During the 2017 Annual Conference of the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society, we aim to explore these topics in depth in order to better understand their role or influence in conserving habitat and how ultimately it affects our wildlife resources.

#### **2017 MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING**

***HABITAT: The Science, Art, and Politics of  
Conserving It***

**Held Jointly with the  
NORTHWEST SECTION OF TWS**

**March 6 - 10, 2017 at the Radisson  
Colonial Hotel in Helena, MT**

## **2017 Annual Conference continued...**

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### **Feeling Generous?**

Want to be part of the event and give a little time? The chapter is looking for volunteers to help with the following: session moderators, judges for student posters and presentations, and help with the student mixer, registration table, etc.

### **Need Meeting Time/Space or Information Table?**

If you have a working group that needs some meeting time during the annual conference or if you'd like to set up an information table for your business or organization, please contact Vanna ASAP so your needs can be accommodated. Include the name of your group or meeting, when you'd prefer to meet, how many in your group, and whether you'll need food and/or beverage service during your meeting. Additional charges may apply to cover the costs of room or table rental, food and beverages.

Please contact Vanna Boccadori ([mttws.preselect@gmail.com](mailto:mttws.preselect@gmail.com); 406-494-2082) with your desire to be part of this amazing event!

**THE DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSION IS FEBRUARY 6, 2017.**

### **Silent Auction Donations?**

Remember to bring donations for the silent auction. Contact Brent Lonner if you have silent Auction items to donate ([mttws.pastpres@gmail.com](mailto:mttws.pastpres@gmail.com)).

### **Registration Coming Soon!!!!**

Please see our website <http://wildlife.org/montana-chapter/> in the near future for conference registration information and more on the conference schedule, workshops, plenary session info, history of the Northwest Section of TWS, etc. In addition, you will be receiving reminders on a regular basis so you won't forget this exciting upcoming event!

### **Hotel Information**

Hotel rooms are available for conference attendees at the rate of \$92/night (government rate) and \$129/night (non-government rate). A block of rooms has been set aside for each and will be held until February 10, 2017. After this date reservations will be based on availability. For reservations, call 406-443-2100 (mention **Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society**). Non-state employees use promotional code: MTWILD. State employees use promotional code: MTCWS.

Non State Employee Link:

<http://www.radisson.com/reservation/itineraryEntrance.do?hotelCode=USAHEMT&promotionalCode=MTWILD>

State Employee Link:

<http://www.radisson.com/reservation/itineraryEntrance.do?hotelCode=USAHEMT&promotionalCode=MTCWS>

Other hotels nearby if needed or desired include the Super 8 ([406-443-2450](tel:406-443-2450)), Jorgenson's Inn and Suites ([406-449-0155](tel:406-449-0155)), and Howard Johnson ([406-443-2300](tel:406-443-2300)). **Remember, the legislature will be in session during our meeting so it is to your benefit to make your reservations early!**

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## **Now Available on the Internet**

**Sponsored by:**

**MT Chapter of the Wildlife Society  
MT Chapter of the American Fisheries Society  
Montana Academy of Sciences**

**[www.IntermountainJournal.org](http://www.IntermountainJournal.org)**

### **What is IJS?**

- *The Intermountain Journal of Sciences (IJS) offers a regional peer-reviewed journal for scientists, educators and students to submit original research, management applications, or viewpoints concerning the sciences.*
- *IJS has been published since 1995 to enhance the educational outreach goals of the sponsoring organizations.*

### **What is Published in IJS?**

- *Any regional submissions of manuscripts dealing with the sciences are welcome.*
- *Abstracts from presentations at annual meetings of the co-sponsoring organizations appear in the last issue of each volume if submitted by the sponsoring organization(s).*

### **What is Available Online?**

- *IJS has a world-wide presence through its website, Montana State University's ScholarWorks (archival home of IJS) & Search Engines.*
- *All published manuscripts or written presentations and poster abstracts from the sponsoring organizations can be found individually as unarchiving progresses.*
- *All contents are "OPEN ACCESS", ensuring maximum availability without costs and press ready PDFs can be downloaded, saved or printed immediately.*

**Additional Information and Contacts:  
[www.intermountainjournal.org](http://www.intermountainjournal.org)**