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The Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society

**Summer/Early Fall Newsletter: National
TWS news, a first look at our next
annual conference, and the happenings
of last year's conference**



Greetings from your MTTWS President

Hello MT TWS and happy summer/fall!

For me, summers are a great time to get out of the office to spend time in the places where we do research. This year, that meant capturing bats in northeastern Montana and observing brown bears in Alaska. (I can't believe I get paid to do these things!) I hope everyone was able to spend some time enjoying wildlife and landscapes in Montana and beyond – whether for work or pleasure (or ideally, both!).

Your MT TWS board met this summer and spent some time reflecting on our second (and dare I say, hopefully last?) virtual conference. Thanks to everyone that helped to make the 2022 conference successful; these meetings really do take a village. I'm very grateful to the plenary speakers for sharing their stories and to all of you for engaging in important conversations about how we can move our profession forward. You also shared lots of knowledge about wildlife in your presentations, working group meetings, and workshops. And perhaps my favorite part, we got to honor students and professionals for their many

achievements and valuable contributions.

We are planning to hold the 2023 annual conference in person in Helena. We are very excited about seeing you all again and having those important face-to-face conversations. Save the date (Feb 13-17) and stay tuned for updates!

Please let me or any of the board members know if you have ideas, questions, or concerns. We'd love to hear from you.

Looking forward to seeing you in February!

~Andrea Litt, President



Get to know your new president-elect and secretary

What has Chad been up to this summer?

Hey all - Reaching out to share a little more about me and what I've been up to as your new President-Elect. First, I want to emphasize that it's a true privilege to serve the Montana Chapter in this capacity. I'm especially excited to work alongside other Montana wildlifers to accomplish important work within our state while building and strengthening professional relationships. I'm also excited for the opportunity to plan next year's annual conference! In fact, we discussed the annual conference at length during our summer board retreat

and planning is underway. I realized right then just what kind of responsibility the Pres-Elect has in this whole thing. Suffice it to say there are big shoes to fill in planning a MT TWS conference and I'll do my best to measure up!

Fortunately, we have a strong board in place to provide support and guidance to ensure the conference will be a success! I also welcome any and all wisdom from you in planning the upcoming conference – don't be afraid to reach out.

As far as my "day" job, I am Director of the Wildlife Biology Program at UM and an ungulate ecologist. I've been in the position at UM for seven years now and continue to enjoy it. I've greatly appreciated the MT Chapter's efforts to support student professional development, and I look forward to helping continue that commitment as a board member. In my free time, I enjoy a plethora of things tied to Montana's great outdoors.... backpacking, camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, and field research. I also like to run, bike and swim (in that order of preference). I don't care for skiing as much, and definitely not snowboarding, so that shouldn't interfere with the last-minute planning for the annual conference! I'm looking forward to serving you as a board member and seeing you all at the annual conference in February!!

-Chad Bishop, President-Elect

New secretary in the house

Hi everyone! I'm excited to serve on the Montana TWS Board. These are some big shoes to fill over here in Rebecca's absence and we on the Board appreciate everything she did for the Chapter over the last few years – thanks Rebecca! For those that don't know me, I'm a nongame wildlife biologist with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks based out of Miles City. Some of my projects this summer included working with partners to document black-billed cuckoos along the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers, testing new methodology for detecting greater short-horned lizard populations, and continuing efforts to monitor the impacts of white-nose syndrome on our MT bat populations. When I'm not in the field or office you can usually find me attempting to garden with my black thumb, kayaking the river with my crazy dog, or enjoying the beautiful nights skies we have here in Montana. Looking forward to (hopefully) seeing everyone in person this year!

-Brandi Skone, Secretary



Chad Bishop



Brandi Skone



TWS (national) is in-person this year!

Register now for \$650 (\$325 for students)

The Wildlife Society annual conference is in your backyard this year! It will take place from **November 5-10, 2022 in Spokane, WA.**

Register and check out the conference schedule by [clicking here \[mttws.org\]](https://mttws.org).

The National TWS conference is a great opportunity to meet lots of wildlife nerds like yourself and get exposure to new topics on conservation, research, and management. It's also an opportunity to network and engage with professionals in the wildlife community, share all the great work you've contributed, and learn from other's experiences. We hope to see you there!

Wildlife Trivia (answer on bottom): Which of these reptiles are native to Montana and viviparous?

- A. Northwestern Garter Snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*)
- B. Greater Short-horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma hernandesi*)
- C. Gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*)
- D. Sagebrush Lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus*)

The 2023 MTTWS Annual Conference will be in person (we think)!

February 13-17, 2023

Delta Hotels Helena Colonial in Helena

"CONFERENCE THEME COMING SOON!!"

We're looking forward to seeing you all in person and are full steam ahead planning another exciting, jam-packed conference at the Delta Hotels Helena Colonial!

At our summer board meeting, we discussed options (again) for a hybrid format. Going into our 3rd year since the pandemic began there's a lot more resources out there to offer a virtual option. If we can pull it off, it will not be a live virtual option but rather an opportunity to watch presentations after the conference if you are unable to attend. Stay tuned for details on this option and our theme!

Congratulations to our Award Winners!

Each year we like to recap the deserving award recipients who were honored at the previous conference. We didn't get any pictures because the conference was virtual, but here's a list of the 2022 award winners. Congratulations to you all!

Distinguished service award: **Montana Bear Specialists (Dan Carney, Shannon Clairmont, Stacy Courville, Kevin Frey, Jamie Jonkel, Mike Madel, Tim Manley)**

Biologist of the Year: **Kris Tempel**

Bob Watts Communication Award: No nominations

Rising Professional: **Lindsey Parsons**

Wildlife Conservation Award: No nominations

Wynn Freeman Awards: **Elise Loggers (MSU)** and **Amelia Evavold (UM)**
Western Meadowlark Award: **Larissa Saarel (Rocky Mountain College)**

Best Oral Presentation - Graduate Student: **Jenny Helm (UM)**
A preliminary look at the effects of livestock grazing on greater sage-grouse nest success and hen survival in central Montana

Best Oral Presentation - Undergraduate Student: **Larissa Saarel (Rocky Mountain College)** *Integrating three scales of analysis to compare spiny softshell turtle nesting habitat in dammed versus undammed rivers*

Best Student Poster - Graduate Student: **Amber Swicegood (MSU)** *Use of autonomous recording units (ARUs) in assessing arrival phenology of a migratory bird in the Northern Great Plains*

Best Student Poster - Undergraduate Student: **Olivia Jakobosky (MSU)**
Evaluating the effects of electric cables on urban howler monkeys with local knowledge and naturalistic observation

TWS Grant Recipients: **Carly Segal (MSU)** and **Bridger Creel (UM)**

Conference Art: **Carly Segal (MSU)** (see photo below)

THE MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
60TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



FOSTERING DIVERSITY IN SPECIES, PEOPLE, AND PERSPECTIVES

Artwork by Carly Segal from 2022 Conference. Do you have talent like this? Stay tuned for our next newsletter on how you can enter our art contest and have your work showcased next year!

Seeking Award Nominations

It's time to start thinking about who YOU want to nominate for one of our fabulous awards. Last year 2 of our awards went unreceived because there were 0 nominations. That's right, ZERO nominations! With all the amazing work done in this state, I bet you know someone or multiple someones who deserve one of these awards. Please consider nominating that someone this year! See below for more details on each award or visit our [website \[mttws.org\]](https://mttws.org).

The Distinguished Service Award: This award is presented for cumulative, past, current, and/or continuing achievements in wildlife conservation. This is typically acknowledgment of accomplishments over a career.

The Biologist of the Year Award: This award is presented annually for significant achievements in wildlife conservation anytime during the five years immediately preceding the award presentation.

The Bob Watts Communication Award: This award is presented for significant communication in media such as professional publications, popular wildlife articles, books, movies, or videos that have a relatively wide audience.

The Wildlife Conservation Award: This award is given to an individual or non-governmental organization for past, present, or ongoing efforts that enhance wildlife conservation in Montana.

The Rising Professional Award: This award recognizes emerging professionals and rising leaders in the wildlife field who are drivers of professional progress in Montana. Eligible candidates will have worked in a part or full-time professional capacity (seasonal or year-round positions) for at least 3 years, and no more than 8 years. Employment need not be continuous. Current students are not eligible. Employment may include, but is not limited to: wildlife and habitat management or research, conservation policy or advocacy, environmental education or program development, consultation, etc.

To nominate, email a written recommendation for a specific award, along with a compelling justification for the nomination and a discussion of the qualifications of the nominee. While there is no prescribed format, nominations often take the form of a formal letter or letters, and are often supported by several agencies, organizations, or MT TWS members. Nominations will be reviewed by the Award Committee and selections will be made in early February. Nominators will be notified of selections at that time and will be asked to assist with coordinating the attendance of the awardee. Send nominations to **Megan O'Reilly** at moreilly@mt.gov.

Small Grants Award

This is also the time to consider how YOU could use one of our grants! Who couldn't use a little extra money to help with that project you've been slaving away on? Or some monies to inspire the youths?! Every year MT TWS awards up to \$1,000 for scientific research AND up to \$1,000 for education and public outreach. If you have a project that falls into one of these categories and aligns with the goals and core values of our Chapter, consider applying! Just do it!!

You can visit our [website \[mttws.org\]](http://mttws.org) to learn more about how to apply. Next newsletter we'll feature some of the past recipients and how they used these monies for success! Stay tuned.

Seeking Nominations for President-Elect

Your MTTWS board is soliciting nominations for **President-Elect** this year. It's a 3-year term full of excitement, surprises, and good-humored folks that want to help you put on the conference of your dreams... or whatever we have enough money to do. Please consider! And if interested, please e-mail Andrea Litt (andrea.litt@montana.edu) by November 1 to nominate yourself or someone else.

Food for Thought From a Fellow Member

Dear Members of the Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society:

May I highlight two articles in the August 2022 issue of JWM, in case you haven't cracked it open yet? First is Paul Krausman's editorial, in the front of the journal, entitled, *Connecting the Public to Wildlife*, and second is a book review, in the back, of Doug Chadwick's *Four Fifths a Grizzly: A New Perspective on Nature That Just Might Save Us All*.

I discovered these through the eyes of a Chapter member who committed to leading a somewhat philosophical conversation on "why we manage wildlife" for Montana teachers who gather at MEA days in Helena this October. It's an update of something I shared with a UM capstone class for a few years, and I'm starting to confront the responsibility of having to repurpose it now. All this

to say that I've been interested in the topics that these JWM articles—and Chadwick—addressed, with mega-times greater preparation and scholarship than I will ever devote, and that's a fact. I think they are timely and offer some clarity in a sometimes overwhelming period in wildlife conservation. I hope it's not just an old guy thing, though we can't dismiss that Krausman and Chadwick are old guys, too.

I'll let you read these for yourselves rather than say much more here. To me, they raise the question, are we doing all we need to do to engage the public in the current wildlife issues of the day? Are we peeking out from under the shadow of our micro-local issues to relate our efforts to the overarching needs enveloping us? And I would answer no, we cannot do it all, not as individuals. But as a society—a collective--of individual professionals, are we covering all the bases? And how would we know whether we are?

May I add that such direction might be a great way to budget a lot of the new nongame funding that's coming our way. Again, let this seed your thoughts while you read.

That's what these guys got me thinking about. I hope you have the chance to check them out!

Sincerely,
Mike Thompson
FWP retired

Answer to trivia question: (B) Rubber boas are native to Montana and do indeed give live birth, but actually considered ovoviviparous. Meaning the eggs hatch inside the body of the animal before live young emerge. Gophersnakes (aka bull snakes) and sagebrush lizards are both native to Montana but oviparous. Meaning they lay eggs. Northwestern garter snakes are NOT native to Montana (although we have 3 species of garter snake that are native) and also ovoviviparous. Leaving us with the greater short-horned lizard, both viviparous and a native Montanan! Also, one of the coolest reptiles out there (definite bias here). The short-horned lizard, unlike all other horned lizards in the U.S. (9) has adapted to giving birth to live young. These little guys can produce between 5 and 36 young from one female in a season!



**Got something for our next
newsletter? Send it to
[mttws.secretary@gmail.com!](mailto:mttws.secretary@gmail.com)**

MTTWS website

[\[mttws.org\]](http://mttws.org)

A banner for the TWS eWildlifer newsletter. The background is a scenic mountain landscape with a lake and a tent. The text is overlaid on the image.

Interested in hearing more from TWS...

Sign up [here](#) for our free, monthly edition of the **eWildlifer** — your one-stop shop for the latest wildlife news, Section and Chapter updates, TWS announcements, and more.

The logo for the TWS Society, featuring a grid of icons representing various wildlife species and the text "TWS SOCIETY" below it.

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