



GEORGIA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018

Save the Date

GA TWS Annual Meeting
Sept. 6-7, 2018
Tifton, GA

Contact Us

<http://wildlife.org/georgia-chapter/>

Executive Committee

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Daymond Hughes
daymond.w.hughes@aphis.usda.gov

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Member-at-Large:
Sharon Swagger
sharon.swagger@ga.usda.gov

Member-at-Large:
Jen Howze
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President's Message

Wow! What a crazy spring we have had. Just when I thought spring had sprung someone would shove it back in the box. And while I am not sure about where you're at, here in NW Georgia it seemed as if the rain would never cease. The weather just kept bouncing between cold spells and warming trends. Many plants started leafing out only to be hit by some really late frosts. Two persimmons within about 100 yards of one another at my house showed drastically different reactions to the frost. Both had started leafing out when the last hard frost hit here. One had nearly every leaf killed, the other shows no sign of frost. I suppose a micro-climate near one kept the temperature just high enough to prevent frost. Perhaps it was the proximity to the house, the few feet lower elevation or the dark green water in the nearby above ground pool releasing enough residual heat to save the leaves.

Those are the type of things that make our jobs so interesting and yet so very difficult. If you've ever worked on a long-term research project or management plan you can appreciate these little nuances that make such huge differences. After the first season of field work and data analysis you've got it figured out. The data analysis shows a statistical outcome that can't be argued. Then the next season's data comes in and well..... Many of us have a love/hate relationship with our job or future job. We strive to obtain the knowledge to manage wildlife species to the best of our ability. And yet there are so many variables we have no control over, in fact I would argue that in our field we seldom have control over any of the variables. And yet we still must postulate as to why this or that happened. Why did a population crash in what the textbooks say was a great year only to recover the next year in what we would consider a poor year at best?

I believe that in any career you need to put yourself into a "micro-climate" that favors you. The wildlife community is a small one, so make every effort to network and communicate with people inside that community. Get to know everyone you can, because remember those students who are presenting undergraduate and graduate research today are the leaders of the wildlife field tomorrow. I know of no other organization that comes close to The Wildlife Society in providing the opportunity in the wildlife arena to meet such a wide variety of people from academics conducting the research to boots-on-the-ground personnel that are implementing what we have learned. "Being a member" is not enough, you need to "BE the TWS" and you can only do this by being involved, attending the annual meeting, being willing to serve on a committee, willing to run for office. Step out of your comfort zone, speak to



someone, ask questions, participate any way you can. I have made lifelong friends since being active in the GA TWS and I continue to make new friends and contacts every year. If you have already started your wildlife career, you have something to give to the organization, if you are a student you do too. I look forward to seeing everyone at the annual meeting and feel free to contact me or any of the other Executive Committee members if you have any questions. Our information can be found at our website <http://wildlife.org/georgia-chapter/>. And while you're online check out and like our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaTWS/>.

Daymond Hughes
President, GA Chapter of TWS

2018 Georgia Chapter of TWS Annual Meeting

September 6–7, 2018, Tifton

This year's GA TWS annual meeting will be held in Tifton. Our meeting venue will be the University of Georgia Tifton Conference Center. This location will accommodate the increased growth in attendees and presentations. The UGA Tifton conference center is located conveniently off I-75 and near ABAC. We plan to have our usual catered social Thursday evening (\$15 ticket, must purchase by August 30). There is a range of hotels in Tifton nearby to the conference center. Information on presentation submission and registration is listed below. We hope to see you in 2018!

If you wish to give a presentation at the annual meeting, please send your title via email to Tina Johannsen (tina.johannsen@dnr.ga.gov) by **Friday August 10, 2018**. Indicate whether you wish to give an oral or poster presentation. Student presenters should also copy Andrew Edelman (aedelman@westga.edu) on the email to be considered for presentation awards. Presenters and attendees should register for the annual meeting no later than **Friday, August 17, 2018**. Registration cost is \$40 for professionals and \$25 for students. Registration and payment can be made at <http://wildlife.org/georgia-chapter/annual-meeting/>.



Treasurer's Report

Since the end of 2017, we have donated \$750 to ABAC for conclave support and \$200 to the Burke 4-H wildlife judging team. During the same time, we received \$490 from the parent chapter for dues and we also had one more person join (\$15) through the local state chapter. Our account is currently sitting at

\$6,306.67, but the venue for the annual meeting will cost us \$2,750 plus additional costs. This should leave us with about a \$3,000 buffer in our account.

GA TWS Elections

The GA TWS Executive Board is up for re-elections this year. The president will be Tina Johannsen, Past-President will be Daymond Hughes, and the remainder of the positions are open, which include:

- President-Elect: Planning the annual meeting
- Treasurer: Managing funds and expenses for the chapter
- Secretary: Managing communications, to include taking notes at meetings, newsletters, etc.
- Member-At-Large (2 positions): Providing support for all positions listed above

Please submit nominations to Sharon Swagger at sharon.swagger@g.usda.gov. Deadline for nominations is **July 27, 2018**.

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Student Chapter

ABAC Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society Hosts the First Southern Forestry Conclave Quiz Bowl
On March 22–24, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College's (ABAC) Forestry Club hosted the 61st Southern Forestry Conclave on the college campus. Over 200 forestry students from thirteen southeastern colleges travelled to Tifton to compete in the event. On the opening night of the event, the ABAC Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society sponsored and organized the inaugural Southern Forestry Conclave Quiz Bowl. The competition was a nonpoint experimental event this year, but hopes are high that it will become an annual part of the Forestry Conclave competition. All the competitors had an enjoyable time, and reviews of the event were exceptional. First place went to Stephen F. Austin State University.



All in a Day's Work for the ABAC Wildlife Society!

On April 21, 2018, students from the ABAC student chapter of The Wildlife Society pulled double duty on their service activities. At 7 a.m., over a dozen students met in the workshop to construct 35 wood duck boxes for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. After eating a quick lunch, a few more members

joined the group, loaded the required supplies in their vehicles, and traveled 25 miles to the Gaskins Forest Education Center in Alapaha, Georgia. Once there, the student members set up an environmental education tent containing skulls, study skins, insects, traps, and other wildlife-related items for the Center's annual "Day in the Woods" environmental education event. Other students assisted with other activities, including teaching children and adults about archery, how to shoot a BB gun, native plant identification, and bird identification. Staying extremely busy has been par for the course for the ABAC Student Chapter this academic year. Members logged a total of over 2000 person-hours in various volunteer, service, and training activities during the fall and spring semesters. In addition, 19 students attended the Southeastern Wildlife Student Conclave and 12 students attended the Georgia Chapter of The Wildlife Society annual meeting. Also, 17 students attended the SE Section of The Wildlife Society's business annual meeting and the annual conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in Louisville, Kentucky.



2019 Southeastern Wildlife Society Student Conclave at ABAC

Mark your calendars! The Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society will be hosting the Southeastern Wildlife Society Student Conclave on March 21-23, 2019. The event will take place on the college's campus, farm, and school forest in Tifton, Georgia. There will be numerous opportunities for GA TWS members and all assistance will be greatly appreciated!

Student Spotlight: JT Pynne, University of Georgia

The Wildlife Society meetings have always been my favorite because the content spans many different animals. I first attended GA TWS during my master's at University of West Georgia. At that time, I was able to present research on Bachman's fox squirrels (*Sciurus niger bachmani*). Recently, I have been presenting information about southeastern pocket gophers (*Geomys pinetis*). My PhD research is a part of a multi-state, multi-institution project to gather as much information as we can about the species. Beyond South Georgia, their historical range extends into southern Alabama and northern Florida. I work with several researchers, including my advisors Drs. Steven Castleberry at Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources and Mike Conner at The Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center, postdoc Sarah Duncan, Drs. Robert McCleery and James Austin at University of Florida, and master's student Elizabeth Parsons and Dr. Robert Gitzen at Auburn University.



Pictured: A southeastern pocket gopher (left; *Geomys pinetis*) and a cluster of mounds (right).

This project has been a fascinating one. Pocket gophers are strange creatures that spend most of their lives underground. They have large front claws for digging and external fur-lined cheek pockets that can close behind the teeth to allow for digging without soil entering the mouth. Gophers are important because they aerate soils and turn over bare ground for seeds to sprout, as well as provide underground burrows for many commensal herpetofauna and invertebrates. From research so far, we have learned that pocket gophers are most typically associated with open canopies, particularly longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) and understories of grasses and forbs (which sometimes manifests as right-of-ways or hay fields). Based on distance sampling, abundance estimates seem to be low which indicates extirpation from much of their range. I am excited to be able to shine more light on these hilarious and adorable fossorial rodents at future meetings. GATWS has always been a welcoming place to present information on any wildlife.



JT Pynne is a third year PhD student at Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources and The Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center. He has a BS in environmental science from Samford University and a MS in biology from University of West Georgia.

Recruiting the Next Generation of Hunters

The [United States Fish and Wildlife Service's latest national survey](#) reported a 16-percent decrease in hunting participation over the past five years which is a monumental issue for wildlife conservation. The University of Georgia Chapter of The Wildlife Society (UGA-TWS) responded by implementing a program aimed at recruiting college students into hunting.

Colleges are an excellent place to introduce people to hunting given that during this time, recreation levels peak and activities adopted often contribute to an individual's identity as they progress through life. The Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources was the perfect place to pilot a program. Students in Warnell already have background knowledge of how hunting supports conservation, many will be working with hunters throughout their future careers, and a large portion of them have never been hunting.

A partnership-based approach provided the capacity to form the Warnell Learn-to-Hunt Program. The Georgia Wildlife Federation, Quality Deer Management Association, Georgia DNR, UGA-TWS, and National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) all provided resources to help kick start the program.

The initial focus of the program was a squirrel hunt in February 2017. Small game hunting often gets overlooked, but it can be excellent recreation for everyone from novice to the most experienced hunters. Squirrels are plentiful, taste excellent, provide a relaxed hunting environment, property access is easy to acquire, and they generally yield more shot opportunities than many other species. An excellent group of students that had never been hunting were selected, took hunter education, participated in training (classroom and field), went on a hunt, and shared their experiences at a follow-up dinner.



The initial phase of the program was certainly successful with 88% of the participants reporting they planned to hunt again and many partaking in follow-up opportunities. To ensure the program is sustained, Seth Cook and Tim Miller were appointed as the Student Hunt Coordinators for UGA-TWS and the UGA Chapter of NWTF, respectively. The coordinators have hit the ground running and are taking on the bulk of responsibility for planning and implementing these hunts.

Seth and Tim have already hosted a dove hunt as a follow up to the squirrel hunt, implemented a deer hunt last fall, and are in the midst of drumming up some new ideas for the coming semesters. This initial model of a college learn-to-hunt program is looking quite promising and replication at other schools will certainly be possible with the help of TWS student chapters.

About the author: Charles S. Evans earned his bachelor's and master's in wildlife biology from the University of Georgia and now works for the Georgia Wildlife Federation as the Georgia R3 Coordinator. His position, which is also supported by Georgia DNR, QDMA, NWTF, and Safari Club International, was created to increase hunting participation and societal acceptance of hunting in Georgia.

GA TWS Student Travel Award

Each year, GA TWS may award a \$250 travel grant to a student attending the GA TWS annual meeting or TWS annual conference. In order to apply, students must fill out the travel grant application found on the GA TWS website, and return it to Sharon Swagger at sharon.swagger@ga.usda.gov by **August 10, 2018**. For more information, visit our website (<http://wildlife.org/georgia-chapter/news/>) or contact any executive board member.

GA TWS Early Career Award in Honor of Dr. Bob Warren

Dr. Robert J. “Bob” Warren, a retired professor of wildlife ecology and management at the University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, and a member of The Wildlife Society for 43 years, has dedicated his career to guiding students into successful wildlife careers. In order to honor Dr. Warren and his commitment, the Georgia Chapter of The Wildlife Society established an award in 2017 in his name, to present to an Early Career Professional. GA TWS will accept nominations annually and award one Early Career Award at our annual fall meeting, as candidates arise.

To be eligible for the award, the Nominees must have:

1. Graduated with BS or MS within the past 10 years
2. Be 40 years old or younger
3. Demonstrated success while working as a wildlife professional in any agency, organization, or the private sector for at least 3 years
4. Be a member of both The Wildlife Society and Georgia Chapter of The Wildlife Society
5. Demonstrated commitment to and involvement in TWS at the state, regional, and/or national levels
6. Have their AWB or CWB certification
7. Demonstrated commitment to mentoring students/rising professionals

Submit nominations to Sharon Swagger at sharon.swagger@ga.usda.gov by **August 1** and include:

1. A cover letter identifying the nominee and describing the work for which he/she is being nominated (1 page)
2. A short CV/biography (1 to 5 pages) of the nominee
3. Additional support letters, if applicable

Award winners will be selected by the GA TWS Executive Board.

GA TWS Jenkins-Crockford-Hayes Wildlife Conservation Award

This award is designed to be a later career award to honor the wildlife professionals who have made significant impacts over their careers across a variety of avenues, to include but not limited to, innovations in research and/or management techniques and contributions to students and professionals, across our state, region, and nation. Dr. James Hobart Jenkins 1919-2006, Jack A. Crockford 1923-2011, and Dr. Frank A. Hayes, 1921-1997, were well known for their contributions to wildlife conservation but are most famous for the Chap-Gar Gun and methodology, and its career changing, innovative, still widely used method for live wildlife capture. All men were well-known, highly regarded, active in their respective societies, well-awarded, and made significant impacts on wildlife in the state, region, and nation.

To eligible for this award, the Nominees must:

1. Be 50 years old or older
2. Have demonstrated success while working as a wildlife professional in any agency, organization, or the private sector for at least 15 years
3. Be a member of both The Wildlife Society and Georgia Chapter of The Wildlife Society
4. Made a significant impact on wildlife/wildlife management in Georgia. Regional and/or national reputation is a plus.

Submit nominations to Sharon Swagger at sharon.swagger@ga.usda.gov by **August 1** and include:

1. A cover letter identifying the nominee and describing the work for which he/she is being nominated (1 page)
2. A short CV/biography (1 to 5 pages) of the nominee
3. 2 additional support letters

From The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

Member Input Opportunity DOI Reorganization Plan – TWS headquarters is seeking member questions, concerns, or ideas regarding the U.S. Department of the Interior's proposed reorganization plans. Please fill out this [Google Form](#) to submit anonymous member input. CAC contacts can also consider distributing this link to chapter and section membership. Member comments will be collated and guide TWS' communications with DOI officials on this subject. Staff Contact: Caroline Murphy.

Recovering America's Wildlife Act soon to drop in Senate – With 45 representatives and counting signed-on as cosponsors of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647), we are expecting companion legislation to drop in the Senate within the next week or so. Keep your Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration eyes peeled for email guidance coming out from TWS headquarters on Senate messaging once we have confirmation of the legislation dropping. Also, be sure to keep checking back to the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife Google Drive toolkit and the TWS Dropbox for more resources and organization unit updates. Staff Contact: Caroline Murphy.

Draft position statement released for member review – TWS Council has released a new Draft Position Statement for member review titled Incorporating Wildlife Needs in Land Management Plans. Organization units and individual members are encouraged to submit suggested edits and comments on this draft position statement during the 60-day member review period. Any comments submitted will be compiled and considered by TWS Council before the final position statement is published. Comments are due to laura@wildlife.org by June 29. Staff Contact: Laura Bies.

Join or Renew Your Membership in Georgia TWS Today!

You can join or renew your membership in the Georgia Chapter of The Wildlife Society online or through the mail. You can renew using a credit card by logging into the national webpage at <https://wildlife.secure.force.com/> or our local webpage at <http://wildlife.org/georgia-chapter/annual-meeting/> (select the dues option). If you prefer to renew by mail, please send a check to (make check out to Georgia Chapter of TWS):

Brent Howze
GA TWS Treasurer
2024 Newton Rd.
Albany, GA 31701

Membership Dues
\$15 for professionals
\$10 for students