



THE WILD TIMES

A newsletter of the Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society

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Congress Scrutinizes Actions of Canada Lynx Biologists

Submitted by Caitlin Burke caitlin@wildlife.org

Members of Congress challenged the credibility of wildlife biologists and federal natural resource agency science when they reviewed the recent events surrounding the National Interagency Canada Lynx Survey. House Resources Committee republicans accused some federal biologists of falsifying data and suggested that wildlife biologists may routinely do so to promote personal agendas.

The House Resources Committee held a hearing on 6 March 2002 to discuss the Canada Lynx Survey and endangered species data collection. The hearing focused on the findings of the General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation into allegations that biologists with federal and state agencies submitted, or participated in the submission of, unauthorized hair samples as part of the National Lynx Survey. Hearing participants also discussed the motivations of the researchers, whether their actions compromised the integrity of the survey, and what safeguards are being instituted by the agencies to prevent this sort of thing from happening in the future.

The Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service implemented the survey in 1999 in an effort to map the range of the Canada lynx, to enhance management and protection of the species. Ronald Malfi, a GAO representative who testified at the hearing, said the GAO investigation confirmed that in four instances unauthorized hair samples not obtained from the Wenatchee and Gifford Pinchot National Forests were submitted for DNA testing as part of the survey for those forests. The biologists who made the submissions were employed by the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. According to the GAO, the biologists maintain that they submitted the samples to test the accuracy of the lab, though they knew that the survey protocol did not provide for such action.

CONTENTS

Election Results	2
Best Paper Awards.....	2
Annual Awards	3
Letter to the Editor.....	3
Obituary	5
Where are they now? ..	5
National Conference ...	6
Financial Report.....	7

One panel of witnesses included Mark Rey, Undersecretary of USDA, Tom Thompson, Deputy Chief of the National Forest System, and Steven Williams, Director of the FWS. These panelists affirmed that the misrepresentation of data is a serious offense, but that this was probably an isolated incident and not an example of widespread agency behavior. However, they also emphasized that both agencies are invoking new ethical standards for employees involved in wildlife research, in order to restore credibility to agency science.

A third panel of witnesses included Dr. L. Scott Mills, associate professor of wildlife population ecology at the University of Montana, Dr. Kevin McKelvey, a Forest Service research ecologist, and Thomas Franklin, Wildlife Policy Director of The Wildlife Society. Dr. Mills developed the DNA-testing protocol for the lynx survey. He asserted in his testimony that the mislabeling of samples by field personnel was a clear breach of the survey protocol, but that their actions did not compromise the integrity of the National Lynx Survey as a whole. Tom Franklin presented testimony on the code of ethics and standards of professional conduct upheld by professional wildlife biologists and managers who are members of The Wildlife Society or are Certified Wildlife Biologists. Franklin emphasized that


wildlife professionals associated with The Wildlife Society are expected to abide by rigorous ethical and professional standards.

Complete testimony of all witnesses can be found on the Resources Committee website at <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/107cong/fullcomm/2002mar06/agenda.htm>

The Wildlife Society
9th Annual Conference

Hosted by the North Dakota Chapter
September 24-28, 2002
Bismarck, North Dakota

- ◆ **Network with Your Colleagues**
- ◆ **Keep Up-to-Date with Technical Information**
- ◆ **Featuring technical paper and poster sessions, workshops, symposia, working group meetings, student activities, exhibits, and social events.**



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Executive Officers Elected

ICTWS members elected 2 new executive officers and re-elected 2 this spring. Kurt Becker was elected president and has worked for several state and federal agencies as a biologist and pilot. He wrote the following for his ballot biography:

“I believe that wildlife professionals should take an active role in natural resource issues. WE are the professionals and if we just hide behind our data, the other side will bulldoze us over with misinformation, distortions, political persuasion and the like. I say go to work each day willing to be fired. Be true to your conscience and never, ever jeopardize your professional integrity. Use the best science available but don't be afraid to speak up and translate your data into terms more easily understood by lay people. This strategy worked well for me and I was able to accomplish a lot in my career.”

Gregg Servheen was elected vice-president and is currently a wildlife program coordinator for Idaho Department of Fish &

Game (IDFG) where he focuses on wildlife habitat issues, mitigation, technical assistance on fish and wildlife issues, and sub basin and strategic planning. Michelle (Commons) Kemner was re-elected as treasurer and is a sage-grouse research biologist for IDFG. Anna Owsiak was re-elected secretary and is an IDFG regional wildlife habitat biologist managing Andrus Wildlife Management Area.

Reese, Harper win best paper awards

Dr. Kerry Reese (University of Idaho) and Barney Harper (Idaho State University) won the best paper awards at the 2002 Annual ICTWS meeting held March 14,15 in Idaho Falls. Dr. Reese was awarded the best professional paper for his presentation entitled “Exploitation of sage-grouse: what is enough?”. Harper won the best student paper for his Master's thesis work “The use of sensory perception by ring-necked pheasants for the detection of germinating seeds, and seeds coated with 6-methoxybenzoxazolinone”.



Dr. Kerry Reese – Best Professional Paper



Barney Harper – Best Student Paper

Peek awarded “Professional Wildlifer”

Dr. James Peek, University of Idaho Emeritus Professor, was awarded “Professional Wildlifer of the Year” at the 2002 Annual ICTWS meeting in Idaho Falls. The Chapter recognized Dr. Peek for his outstanding contributions to Idaho’s wildlife since his retirement in 1999. Dr. Peek has served on several committees including Idaho’s Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Delisting Advisory Team, the wolf management panel which is writing the plan for management of the Idaho wolves by the IDFG, and a grizzly bear advisory committee for British Columbia. Dr. Peek continues to work with Oregon, Idaho, and Idaho Power on predictive models for mule deer populations, teaches an undergraduate course where he and the class backpacks into the Taylor Ranch, mentors 2 Ph.D. students, and teaches an enrichment course at Taylor Ranch. He also writes a bi-weekly column for the Lewiston Morning Tribune where he educates the public on wildlife ecology and management topics. Dr. Peek is the first to receive this award twice, the first time was in 1983.

Former IDFG director wins special recognition

The ICTWS chose Rod Sando, former Director of IDFG, for its “Special Recognition Award”. Sando was honored for restoring IDFG credibility among politicians and the sporting public as well as restoring morale of the employees during his less than 2 year tenure. He instituted major administrative changes in accounting and began a program to upgrade the aging fleet of vehicles. Sando emphasized professional behavior and made decisions based on the best available information provided by biologists. He also refused to be swayed by special interest groups, a philosophy which led to his resignation from the Department in late January.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Old-Time Big-Game Biologist Speaks Out

I accepted the ICTWS professional of the year award on behalf of my wife Pat, students past and present, colleagues, and perhaps this allows me to offer a few comments to chapter members. I consider colleagues in the broadest sense, and everyone in the profession is a colleague for me. This means that the award represents us all, with the implicit understanding that I never operated in a vacuum but always with the help of my fellow wildlife biologists. I received support since 1958 from many agencies and people, and without that support I would be nothing.

I was brought into the profession by game managers in Montana who, “played me like a tune”. They mentored me, gave me responsibility, criticized my mistakes and supported my efforts in ways that had a lasting effect on my career. I wish for everyone to have the support I received as they enter the profession. Indeed, that support is being provided by those with more experience to those with less, evidence at the Idaho Falls meeting being the most recent. There is an obligation, often unspoken, for those with responsibility for others to encourage and mentor their progress, and this is often done in unintended ways. I only



Ki te raki ki te tonga — Ki uta ki tai
 (“From north to south — From mountains to sea”)

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 Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research (New Zealand)
 Australasian Wildlife Management Society
 Ngāi Tahu (Māori tribe of New Zealand's South Island)
 New Zealand Department of Conservation

Sponsor:

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3IWMC@landcare.cri.nz

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have to consider the presentations of the students at a Chapter meeting and think of myself 48 years ago, literally unable to speak to a group of professional biologists, to see progress!

I have been very fortunate to have served at the University of Idaho. Our wildlife group has basically supported each other's efforts and we have not had the battles that characterize some faculty groups. It is instructive to listen to colleagues discuss, on the way back from Idaho Falls, the ins and outs of the current curriculum, for about two hours straight, a demonstration of how much concern there is for doing the best for students. We have been able to focus on our teaching and research functions, a very important contributor to our progress. So many colleagues have had input into our efforts, both through cooperating on student and faculty research, and in providing lectures. As my career wanes, I realize how important this all has been.

We witness in Idaho a retrenchment in the never-ending effort to make progress in professional wildlife management. Currently at some levels, ignorance, ego, resentment, fear, and outright malice impede progress and waste precious dollars. But in the field where the action on the ground is, we still make progress. Whether we

study the distribution of an amphibian never before considered, manage predation by removing the Russian olives that the predators inhabit, discover a chemical that corn kernels produce, or demonstrate one more time that farmed pheasants don't survive in the wild, we learn. We gain experience with the methodology, the results, learn about the land; we learn about things along the way, in unintended ways, as we engage ourselves. All adds to our long-term obligations to improve our management, if not now, later. And I see wildlife biologists moving on with the effort even if it doesn't seem to be appreciated. That is one important mark of the professional, the willingness to continue to learn in the face of resistance.



Dr. James Peek and Jeff Copeland enjoy a conversation during the 2001 ICTWS fund raising auction and banquet.

At present, I am engaged in encouraging my fellow professionals to examine the opportunities to work with predictions. We often have long runs of information that gets reported in the required places,

but are not examined for their utility in developing predictions. We operate on hindsight and experience, and we don't really put our information to as much work as we could. I think many biologists know what is going to happen, given certain kinds of winter or summer conditions, with a population of whatever they deal with, and they essentially do predict using that experience. But that is not the quantitative kind of prediction that can be examined rigorously, because it isn't put into quantitative terms. I see this process of formalizing our predictions to be an extension of the ongoing field effort, a more comprehensive means to working with the public, and a way to encourage understanding by everyone. It helps the lay citizen to understand the difference between a professional wildlife biologist and a self-trained naturalist, or a hunter. If implemented in difficult and controversial management situations, as has been done with waterfowl in some cases, it may help to improve the management situation we find ourselves in today. In the final analysis, it could help to professionalize management more and conserve resources more effectively.

The methodology I use is old-hat to biologists with a course in statistics under their belt, so I see this as another way to use more of the education we have received than we ordinarily use. Of course, we can use more sophisticated methodology as well, and we should. This all provides an opportunity to learn what in the environment best serves to predict harvest, population size, or whatever. And in the end, the field biologist with

that local knowledge needs to appraise the effort to ensure that it makes sense. Forward-looking management is the future to progress, as I see it.

Finally, information exchange is the name of the game for The Wildlife Society. We need more information exchange among professionals at the meetings. I suggest that we use more invited presentations to ensure more participation and information exchange. Presentations from the land management agencies about ongoing activities, and from biologists representing the various regions of the state, should be requested and will help to inform us all of what is going on within Idaho. I think it is our obligation to keep up-to-date with wildlife management in the state and the Chapter serves in this role. It may mean a longer more complex meeting, but it is important.

I'm very proud to be an old-time "big-game biologist", and to be associated with you all. Thanks for the memories, including those still ahead. **James M. Peek.**

OBITUARY - Dr. Barry L. Keller

Barry L. Keller passed away Monday, May 13, 2002, in Idaho Falls, Idaho, after a valiant battle with cancer.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, to Raymond and Mildred Keller on November 15, 1937, Barry grew up in La Grange, Illinois, the youngest of four children. Barry received his Bachelor and Master's degrees at Western Michigan University and his Ph.D. at Indiana University. He and his wife, Nancy, whom he met at Western Michigan, moved to Pocatello in 1970. Barry taught in the Department of Biology at Idaho State University as Professor of Mammalian Ecology for 32 years. He was also Curator of Mammals at the Idaho Museum of Natural History. He loved working with students and he particularly enjoyed his research on the bats of Idaho. Dr. Keller received a large number of grants over the years, making it possible to fund his own research as well as many graduate students.

Barry was active in a large number of organizations: the South Bannock County Museum in Lava Hot Springs, Lava Ranch Property Owners Association, the Idaho Falls Symphony, and Anam Cara – the Chamber Choir of Idaho were just a few. Attending Ballet West performances in Salt Lake City was also a favorite pastime. In recent years, besides his family and new granddaughter, music became his love, his passion. Singing in Idaho Falls, Sun Valley, and on several trips to Europe were some of his most memorable times.

Barry is survived by Nancy Keller of Pocatello; daughters Cindy Keller-Peck (Dallas) of Boise, Idaho, and Jennifer Keller Saathoff (Richard) and granddaughter, Rachel, of Layton, Utah; a brother, Thomas Keller of Michigan; a sister, Rae Lea Callaway of Illinois; and numerous nieces and nephews. A sister, Millie, preceded Barry in death.

A funeral service will be held at St. John's Episcopal Church in Idaho Falls, Idaho, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 16, 2002. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the American Cancer Society. – Family Tribune -



Paul Makela

Where are they now? Featured Past Member of ICTWS

Paul Makela transferred from his wildlife biologist position with the Bureau of Land Management in the fall of 2001 and is now working for the US Forest Service in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Paul said the only thing he doesn't miss about the west is sagebrush pollen. But he admits it's good to be back near his family.

If you know the whereabouts of past ICTWS members, please submit a few lines and a picture to:

Dave Musil – ICTWS Newsletter Editor,

868 East Main Street, Jerome, Idaho 83338 dmusil@idfg.state.id.us

Preliminary Program Established for National Meeting

The 9th Annual TWS Conference will be held in Bismarck, North Dakota, September 24 – 28, 2002. The following plenary session, symposia, special poster session, and general papers and posters are planned for the four day conference.

Plenary

- **Feeding the World: A Food Policy for All Species**

Symposia

- **Management of North American Blackbirds** – Sponsor: TWS Wildlife Damage Management working group
- **North American Grasslands: Building a Conservation Strategy**
- **Restoration of Wildlife and their Habitats** – Sponsor: TWS Restoration Working Group
- **Prairie Grouse: Managing Imperiled Species and Habitats** – Sponsor: TWS Sustainable Use of Ecosystem Resources Working Group
- **Public Wildlife** – Private Land Programs: Conservation or Commercialization of Wildlife? – Sponsor: TWS Economics Working Group and TWS Conservation Education and Extension Working Group
- **Influence of Invasive Species on Biological Diversity** – Sponsor: TWS Biological Diversity Working Group
- **Sampling Rare and/or Elusive Species: Challenges and Choices** – Sponsor: TWS Biometrics Working Group
- **Science and Large-Scale Conservation Planning for Northern Prairie Birds**
- **Conservation in Ricelands: Current Knowledge and Future Research and Education**
- **Role of Certification to the Wildlife Profession in the 21st Century** – Sponsor: TWS Professional Development Committee
- **Diversity: Not Just for Wildlife Anymore** – Sponsor: TWS Ethnic and Gender Diversity Committee
- **Diseases of Wild Birds: Ecology, Management and Effects on Populations**
- **Toxicological Effects on Wildlife Related to Agriculture** – Sponsor: TWS Wildlife Toxicology Working Group
- **Modern Regression Methods: New Tools for Wildlifers** – Sponsor: TWS Biometrics Working Group

Workshops

- **Performance Measures for Ecosystem Management and Ecological Sustainability** – Sponsor: TWS Biological Diversity Working Group
- **Media Self Defense: Skills and Strategies for Wildlife Professionals** – Sponsor TWS Urban Wildlife Working Group
- **Wildlife Study Design: An Introduction to Basic Design Principles for Field Studies** – Sponsor: TWS Biometrics Working Group
- **GIS in the Management of Natural Resources** – Sponsor: TWS GIS, Remote Sensing, and Telemetry Working Group
- **Learning Theory, Motivation, and Today's Wildlife Students** – Sponsor: TWS College and University Wildlife Education Working Group
- **Wildlife Investigator Series: Instructional Packages for K-12 Presentations**

Special Poster Session

- **Wildlife Toxicology: Contaminant Issues in the Northern Great Plains** – Sponsor
TWS Wildlife Toxicology Working Group

Contributed Papers and Posters

- Ecology and Conservation of Birds
- Ecology and Conservation of Mammals & Other Wildlife
- Conservation of Communities, Ecosystems, & Landscapes
- Wildlife-Habitat Relationships
- Wildlife Population Dynamics, Estimation & Modeling
- Human Dimensions, Conservation Education & Conservation Policy
- Wildlife Damage Management
- Environmental Contaminants & Wildlife Diseases

Financial Report: 1 January – 31 December, 2001**Submitted by Michelle (Commons) Kemner, ICTWS Treasurer**

Beginning Balance – January 1, 2001	Checking	4,387.30
	Short-term Bond	<u>3,523.20</u>
	TOTAL	\$7,910.50
Income – 1 January - 31 December 2001	Checking	14,810.00
	Short-term Bond	<u>264.05</u>
	TOTAL	\$15,074.05
Expenses – 1 January - 31 December 2001		\$12,242.68
Ending Balance – 31 December 2001	Checking	6,917.04
	Short-term Bond	<u>3,787.25</u>
	TOTAL	\$10,642.71

2001 Detailed Income and Expenses
Checking Account

Income:		Expenses:	
Meeting 2001	9,039.00	Meeting 2001	7,488.15
Auction 2001	3,046.00	Auction Items	693.71
Membership 01-02	2,225.00	Supplies	81.12
Potlatch	<u>500.00</u>	Awards	298.86
TOTAL	\$14,810.00	Website Hosting	70.00
		Newsletter	847.84
		Idaho 4-H	500.00
		Gratson Fund	1,430.00
		Reno Meeting	500.00
		NW Section	75.00
		Other	<u>258.00</u>
		TOTAL	\$12,242.68