



Urban Wildlife News

The Newsletter of the Urban Wildlife Working Group
of The Wildlife Society

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Editors: Lowell Adams and Jennifer Cotting

A Word from the Chair

Kate Stenberg

Happy New Year!

The past year has been a busy one for the Working Group. David Drake organized our workshop on the Bow Conservation Corridor that explored local efforts to plan for wildlife in the Calgary, Alberta region for the 2004 TWS Annual meeting. We had an extremely informative day learning about some of the local management challenges. Check out the photos of the field trip later in this issue!

Lowell Adams and Jennifer Cotting continue to work on and publish our newsletter. If you have any news of interest to the Working Group, please be sure to pass it along to them for inclusion in our next newsletter – their email addresses are available in this issue.

The Working Group submitted a proposal for encouraging international membership to Council for consideration at its March Meeting. Council forwarded the proposal to a subcommittee working on membership issues. At this time we have not yet received any feedback on the proposal.

The new year, 2005, promises to be just as busy as 2004. The periodic urban wildlife conference will be sponsored again by the Working Group and the Arbor Day Foundation from May 23-25. This is an absolutely wonderful conference setting – the venue is

small, so there is ample opportunity to really get to know other conference attendees and share experiences. I strongly encourage everyone to attend. We have the opportunity to make this “our” conference as it is one of the few venues that focus on urban wildlife management issues. Go to <http://www.arboday.org/programs/graphics/uwm.pdf> for more information.

The Working Group proposal for a workshop at The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, in September, has been accepted. This will be the third in a series of workshops focusing on local wildlife planning and management issues in the conference location.

We are now in an election year! Interested in helping out the working group? Know someone who is, but maybe is just a little shy? Contact Brent Rudolph with nominations (rudolphb@michigan.gov). Self-nominations are welcome. Not sure what's involved? Give me a call or send me an email and I'll give you the “inside skinny.”

As the world urbanizes, the Working Group's perspectives will be even more relevant in the future. As more agencies begin to look for alternative revenue streams that tap into the urban resident's interest in non-consumptive uses and “watchable wildlife” opportunities, this working group will have much to offer the Society. TWS should remain the leader in this special area of involvement with wildlife and

it can through a strong and focused working group. And that means you...

Calgary Workshop

The workshop on the Bow Conservation Corridor sponsored by the working group on September 17th was a great success. Approximately 27 people registered and about 21 attended.

The workshop began in the morning with a panel presentation that gave an overview of the regional issues and players and some of the solutions to integrating wildlife movements, habitat, tourism, transportation corridors, and residential development.

The afternoon was spent touring the areas discussed in the morning with knowledgeable guides. Participants were able to see first hand wildlife overpasses and underpasses designed to mitigate the impacts of the Trans-Canada Highway.



The common and abundant species *Homo sapiens* using a wildlife overpass of the Trans-Canada Highway near Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Wildlife overpass of the Trans-Canada Highway near Calgary, Alberta, Canada



Wildlife exclusion fencing along the Trans-Canada Highway near Calgary, Alberta, Canada

The National Park's efforts to manage bark beetle infestations and the danger of wildfires both within Banff National Park and in the surrounding landscapes that are

increasingly encroached upon by residential and industrial uses also were reviewed.

The field trip was the highlight of the day for everyone.

Madison Workshop Proposal Approved

Our workshop proposal entitled "Urban Wildlife Management Issues in Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin," was accepted for the 12th Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society, September 25-29, 2005, in Madison, Wisconsin. The day-long workshop is scheduled for Sunday, September 25. A registration fee of \$25/person is now required for all workshops to help cover costs associated with these events. For further information please contact Harry Zinn at Penn State University (hzinn@psu.edu).

Nominating and Elections Committee

The Chair is seeking two volunteers (to assist Brent Rudolph who has already volunteered) to serve on this committee. Please strongly consider this request and if you can serve contact Kate as soon as possible (kate@quailcroft.com). The responsibilities of the committee are presented in the working group charter, which is posted on our web site. The committee's slate of candidates needs to go to the membership in the summer 2005 issue of the newsletter that will be published by 1 July. Please send suggestions for candidates to Kate.

TWS Executive Director Steps Down

At the end of September 2004, Harry Hodgdon stepped down as Executive Director of The Wildlife Society after 27 years of dedicated service to the organization.

He arrived at TWS in 1977 as Field Director and became Executive Director in 1982. During his tenure, the Society established a full-time wildlife policy position to advocate the use of wildlife science in decision-making, initiated and sustained a long-range planning process, established a professional development program, expanded international activities, developed subject-area working groups, initiated and organized an annual conference and trade show, and established a managing editor position and permanent editorial office, among other accomplishments.

We will miss you, Harry. All best wishes.

Our Members at Work

As you may have read in the *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, Urban Wildlife Working Group member Michael O'Donnell of the Department of Biology at Trinity College in Connecticut and Anthony J. DeNicola of White Buffalo, Inc. recently wrapped up work with suburban raccoons.

Their abstract for the subsequent paper, entitled "Den site selection of lactating female raccoons following removal and exclusion from suburban residences," describes the project in this way . . .

Nuisance situations involving small and medium size mammals are prevalent in suburban environments. To address this management issue many state wildlife agencies have created Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator (NWCO) programs that

permit the handling of select wildlife species by licensed individuals. These programs have come under much criticism with regard to lack of emphasis on nonlethal alternatives to solving these conflicts.

We assessed the behavior of lactating raccoons after on-site release to determine subsequent den site selection. Fifteen of twenty females that were extracted from a suburban residence, and we could locate at least once, returned to another residence at least once. Of the den sites selected one year post-release, 59% were human-made structures and the remainder were natural shelters.

It is evident that female raccoons that have used human dwellings for rearing young will select another home if released on-site. This problem is facilitated because many suburban homeowners take little initiative to prevent entry of wildlife into their homes.

For more information on the study, contact Mike (michael.odonnell@trincoll.edu).

International Dawn Chorus Day 2005

Join bird lovers all around the world by taking part in International Dawn Chorus Day--the World's Favorite Birdwatch! Events are organized by local bird and wildlife conservation groups on or near the first Sunday in May each year. For further information, please visit the International Dawn Chorus Day web site (www.idcd.info).

Urban Session at the 27th Congress of the International Union of Game Biologists

The 27th Congress of the International Union of Game Biologists will be held in Han-

nover, Germany, August 28-September 3, 2005. One of the conference topics will be "Wildlife in Urban Areas." Contributions are invited. For further information, please contact Dr. Anne Strattner, Institute of Wildlife Research, School of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, Bischofsholer Damm, 30173 Hannover, Germany (e-mail: Info@IUGB-2005.de; Home page: www.iugb-2005.de).

Essay

Two Hours of Backyard Squirrel Watching

September 2, 1987 was a beautiful pre-fall day in the Washington, D.C. area. The afternoon temperature was 78 degrees, the sky was deep blue with some white fluffy clouds, and there was a slight breeze. At his suburban house in Silver Spring, Maryland, one of the authors (DLL) had interrupted window cleaning because some bees were getting a bit too friendly. He was wetting down newly sown grass seed not only to help it germinate, but to discourage a mixed flock of house sparrows and house finches that apparently were reveling about some newly found feed. Shortly after 3 pm, Vagn Flyger, Professor Emeritus, University of Maryland drove up to the house to deliver a book Leedy had agreed to review for *The Journal of Wildlife Management*. Vagn accepted an invitation to have a beer, so the two retired wildlife biologists proceeded to the patio adjacent to a wooded backyard.

Only a minute or two after we had become comfortably seated in lawn chairs, Vagn exclaimed "there is a squirrel carrying a young one!" We watched quietly as a mother gray squirrel with the young one grasping her with its feet around neck and head crossed the lawn within 15 feet of us at the nearest point. Unlike a kitten, which hangs limp from the mother house cat when being carried, the young squirrel, estimated

by Flyger to be about 5 weeks old, seemed to curl belly-up in the mouth of its mother as though cooperating in this move, presumably from one nest to another. The adult squirrel, with its young, passed over a black water hose stretched over the surface of the yard and stopped momentarily every 15 feet or so as if to rest or to observe the two old biologists sitting on the patio. After traveling some 45 feet of lawn, the adult, still carrying the young squirrel, climbed a large tulip poplar tree (80 feet or so) where we could observe the climb for about 20 feet before the squirrels disappeared on the backside of the tree.

Flyger, who had often witnessed the transfer of young squirrels from one nest to another in his many years of research, still marveled at their performances. After about 15 minutes, we saw a squirrel crossing from high in the tulip poplar tree to another large tulip poplar tree and on to a Norway spruce tree where it disappeared from view. After another 5 to 10 minutes, we saw the mother squirrel with another young squirrel taking the same route across the lawn and up the same tree. After a few minutes, we observed the adult squirrel taking the same aerial route back to the neighbor's lot and again, within 10 minutes, the mother squirrel carried another young squirrel to its new home. The aerial route back to the neighbor's lot was somewhat different, but on the fourth trip we observed the mother squirrel entering Leedy's backyard through a picket fence and on across the yard to the tulip tree—same route, same behavior.

At this point, Leedy asked Flyger whether he thought that there might be more young, and why the young squirrels were being moved—we did not know, of course, whether any squirrels had been transported before we began our observations. Vagn stated that usually there are no more than

four young per litter but occasionally there are more, and indicated that with the occurrence of so many 17-year cicadas, 1987 should be a good year for squirrels—the backyard was literally perforated with the holes from which many hundreds of cicadas had emerged in June. He also observed that because “squirrels can’t count,” the mother squirrel would go back one last time to determine whether any young were left in the old nest. Sure enough, the mother squirrel made one last trip, taking the aerial route both to and from the neighbor’s lot. As to the reason for the move, Flyger opined that it might be because of disturbances at the former nest, or the presence of excessive numbers of fleas and such.

Our observations ended about 5:15 pm. We had spent two most enjoyable hours in backyard squirrel watching. Birds seen during this time consisted of a house finch (probably full of grass seed) peering down at us from high in a red maple tree, and a couple of titmice checking out an empty bird feeder and drinking from a bird bath. On this occasion it was the squirrels rather than the birds that had “made our day.” One of the advantages of being retired is the opportunity to observe wildlife in one’s backyard. There is a lot to be seen there if one takes the time to look.

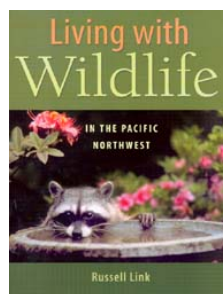
--Daniel L. Leedy and Vagn Flyger

Editors’ note: This article was written when the authors were members of the Board of Directors of the National Institute for Urban Wildlife. Daniel L. Leedy passed away January 20, 2003. Vagn Flyger continues to live in Silver Spring, Maryland. Both gentlemen had distinguished careers in the wildlife profession.

New in Print

Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Urban Wildlife Conservation, edited by William W. Shaw, Lisa K. Harris, and

Larry VanDruff, have been published. Forty-seven papers are grouped into three sections: Urban Ecology Overviews, Managing Urban Wildlife, and Planning/Habitat/and Social-Political Dimensions. The proceedings are available in PDF at cals.arizona.edu/pubs/adjunct/snr0704. Hard copies may be ordered for \$25 each from CALSMART at cals.arizona.edu/calsmart.



Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest, by Russell Link, ISBN 0-295-98386-8, 350pp., \$26.95.

This book is about coexisting with the animals commonly found in gardens, ponds, attics, crawl spaces, and other places where humans and wildlife cross paths throughout Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. It is available from the University of Washington Press, P.O. Box 50096, Seattle, WA 98145-5096 (www.washington.edu/uwpress).

Wildlife-Friendly Plants: Make Your Garden a Haven for Beneficial Insects, Amphibians and Birds, by Rosemary Creeser, 144pp., \$19.95.



This book is a practical guide specifically designed to help gardeners choose the best plants for encouraging and supporting wildlife. By attracting beneficial wildlife, gardeners can eliminate the use of a range of chemicals and create a healthier environment. This book is intended for any size garden from large to small in the city or country. It is available from Firefly Books (www.fireflybooks.com).

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