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TWS Wildlife Damage Management Working  
Group Newsletter

Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for

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2007

## Interactions: Supplemental Issue Elections 2007

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# INTERACTIONS

## BOARD CANDIDATES

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Susan Jojola	2
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### Supplemental Issue:

*Elections and Essay from  
TWS Executive Director  
Michael Hutchins*

### Special points of interest:

- Board member candidates
- Essay by Michael Hutchins, Executive Director of TWS

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## VOTE....SPECIAL ELECTION ISSUE OF INTERACTIONS

Elections are an important part of any organization, and we are no different. The Wildlife Damage Management Working Group is the most active of all TWS working groups, and to remain so we need good leadership. Active groups have many opportunities for those who want to be involved, and again we are no different. I can guarantee there will be plenty of jobs that need someone and the calls for help will soon come. But in the meantime, one job that everyone can participate in is choosing our next leaders.

Our working group Charter requires us to hold elections on a regular basis. Over time, we have been able to evolve to regular and fair elections so we get to enjoy the luxury of seeing the very capable

candidates who choose to run. Every working group member has the responsibility to take elections seriously and spend the time necessary to pick the candidates of their choice. In fact I will even go so far as to say casting votes should be incumbent upon all members! Voting is part of being a professional and it is also a part of supporting the group as a whole.

I look at the slate of candidates running this time and as usual I'm very impressed. I have been the newsletter editor or held an elected position of this working group for 10 years now (and yes, I'm still only 29!) and I cannot think of a single Board member who represented our



WDMWG President - Art Smith

working group in a less than professional manner. With the awesome caliber of the

candidates it will not be hard to decide who can do the job, but it may be very hard limiting your choices to just 3!

Thank you for your time, please vote, and send your selection to Joe by December 10. You have several choices in choosing your candidates, you can fill out and mail in the ballot, fill out and e-mail the electronic ballot, or send Joe Caudell an e-mail at [joe.n.caudell@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:joe.n.caudell@aphis.usda.gov) (in the body of the message include your 3 selections.

Thanks! Art

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A TWS MEMBER?

*AN ESSAY BY MICHAEL HUTCHINS, PH.D.,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO TWS*

*"Social cohesion demands a creed, or code of behavior, or a prevailing sentiment, or, at best, some combination of all three; without something of the kind, a community disintegrates..."*

Bertrand Russell, *Power: A New Social Analysis* (1938)

Upon discovering that one could join a TWS section or chapter, but not be a member of the so-called "parent organization", that is, of TWS as a whole, I'll admit to being very surprised. In fact, it has been estimated that as many as half of the individuals participating in "our" organization currently limit their involvement and support exclusively to the regional or local level. One

## WENDY M. ARJO

## MEET THE CANDIDATES!

Wendy Arjo is a research wildlife biologist and Acting Field Station Leader for the National Wildlife Research Center's Olympia Field Station. She received her B.S. degree from Southern Oregon State and her M.S. degree in biology from Northern Arizona University. She received her doctorate degree from the University of Montana in 1998. Her dissertation research involved documenting behavioral responses of coyotes to wolf recolonization in Glacier National Park.

From 1998-2001, Wendy worked as a wildlife biologist and program manager for AGEISS Environmental, Inc., a contractor for the Department of Defense, documenting competition and interactions between pronghorn and feral horses, and kit fox and coyotes in the Great Basin Desert. Currently, Wendy is conducting several projects to increase our understanding of mountain beaver biology and damage issues. In addition, Wendy has worked cooperatively with Alabama Wildlife Services and Auburn University, where she is an adjunct professor, to understand raccoon population demographics and movements and the use of natural barriers and the potential influence on rabies transmission.



Wendy has been a member of The Wildlife Society since 1996 and has been a Member of The Wildlife Damage Management Working Group since 2002.

*Choose 3  
of the 6  
candidates!*

## SUSAN JOJOLA

Susan Jojola is a Wildlife Biologist for the Invasive Mammals Project at the USDA/APHIS/WS National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) in Fort Collins, Colorado. Currently her research efforts are focused on invader behavior of invasive Norway rats. While employed at NWRC for the past eight years Susan has contributed to other research studies that include mitigation of blackbird damage to agriculture, improved lethal control of brown treesnakes and brown and Norway rats, fertility control in Canada geese and white-tailed deer, ORV bait development for skunks, and assessment of attractants for nutria. Prior to working with the NWRC, Susan evaluated mountain plover migration and nesting biology in southeast Colorado, and sandhill crane fledging success and fall recruitment in northwest Colorado for the Colorado Division of Wildlife (Department of Natural Resources). Susan received her B.A. in Psychology (1993) and M.S. in Wildlife Science (1998) from New Mexico State University. Her thesis compared radio- and satellite-telemetry techniques for management of gemsbok on



White Sands Missile Range, NM. Susan has been a member of TWS since 1997 and the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society since 2000. She is a member of the Wildlife Damage Management Working Group and the Native Peoples' Wildlife Management Working Group of TWS. She is also a member of the APHIS Native American Working Group and serves as a liaison for tribes and the NWRC. Susan served as a Board member for the WDMWG from 2005-2007 and would be honored to serve another term. "Serving as a Board member for the Wildlife Damage Management Working Group for the past two years has been rewarding. It would be a privilege to continue to serve such an active membership that support resolving human-wildlife conflicts through expansion of knowledge, skills, and innovative management tools."



## NICKI FREY

## MEET THE CANDIDATES!

### Education

I graduated West Virginia University with a BS Degree in Wildlife Management in 1996. I obtained my Master's degree in Wildlife Biology at Utah State University in the spring of 2001. I focused on the affects of predator removal on ring-necked pheasant recruitment. I began working toward my PhD in Wildlife Biology at Utah State University in January 2000, completing that degree in September 2004. I focused on the interactions between red foxes, raccoons, striped skunks, their use of a corridor environment, and the effects of management on predator populations.

### TWS History

Chapter Memberships: I'm a member of the Utah state chapter, since 2000. I'm a member of the CMPS chapter since 2004. I've been a member of the national chapter since 1996.

Working Groups: I belong to the Wildlife Damage Management and the Public Conservation, Education and Outreach working groups. Both since 2004.

TWS Meeting Involvement: I attend each TWS national meeting, and each TWS state chapter meeting. My meeting attendance with the CMPS has been spotty, due to other obligations in the summer, but I try to go as much as possible. I've been attending the Wildlife Damage Management Working Group for the last 3 years.



### Work History

I began working for USU Extension and Jack H. Berryman Institute in October 2004, to focus on solving wildlife management issues in southern Utah as the Assistant Extension Wildlife Specialist. In this role, I belong to several local management groups focusing on sensitive species in the area. Additionally, I am cooperating with Southern Utah University on a project to create a prairie dog management demonstration site at the agricultural farm. I am also working with Wildlife Services on a predator-livestock interaction study to better understand the relationship between grazing rotational cycle and mammalian predation. Additionally, I teach Principles of Natural Resource Management at Southern Utah University. I am also involved with 4-H at the national and state level for the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program. As of July 2006, I also serve as the Continuing Education Coordinator for the Jack H. Berryman Institute. In this role, I consult with Wildlife Services employees concerning Wildlife Biologist certification as well as provide them with academic opportunities.

### Vision

My interest in wildlife management resides in increasing the positive interactions between human activity (towns, agriculture, recreation) and wildlife. I would like to increase the benefits of providing wildlife habitat on private lands. I am also interested in creative solutions to human-wildlife conflicts that benefit both parties involved. I would like to see TWS incorporate more human dimensions (i.e conflict resolution, public involvement) into our focus; therefore I actively seek opportunities to do so.

*Choose 3  
of the 6  
candidates!*

## SCOTT CRAVEN

I am currently a Professor, Extension Wildlife Specialist, and Associate Chair in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Wildlife damage management has been a key component of my extension, teaching, and research activity since I joined the faculty in 1979. I still view wildlife damage management as a "growth industry" within the broader wildlife profession and I urge students to learn more about it and consider it as a possible career path.

I have served one term as Chair of the Wildlife Damage Management Working Group (although a long time ago), and therefore also served as chair-elect and past-chair and I was one of the original Wildlife Damage Management

Working Group members. I was involved with the National Animal Damage Control Association before its demise and with nuisance wildlife control operator training and certification issues in the early stages and evolution of that industry.

At the Wildlife Society level, I served as president of the North Central Section and the Wisconsin Chapter, as long time faculty advisor for the UW-Madison Student chapter, along with service involving numerous committees, position statements, and as co-host of the 2005 national conference. I have a bit of service left in me and can think of no better place to use it than with the Wildlife Damage Working Group.

## BEN WEST

Ben C. West is an Associate Professor in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at Mississippi State University. Ben's primary responsibility is that as the National Outreach Coordinator for The Berryman Institute at Mississippi State and Utah State Universities. In addition, Ben also serves as the Wildlife and Fisheries Extension Coordinator at Mississippi State and teaches a class or two each year at MSU.

Ben's educational background includes a B.S. in natural resources management at the University of Tennessee-Martin, an M.S. in wildlife from Virginia Tech, and a Ph.D. in wildlife from Utah State University. Ben's profes-



sional interests include wildlife damage management, communication, and leadership in the natural resources arena.

Ben has been an active member of The Wildlife Society, having served as Associate Editor for the Wildlife Society Bulletin, President for the Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society, and Advisor for the Student Chapter at Mississippi State University. Apart from spending time with his family, Ben's spare time is filled by reading, woodworking, cooking, and college football.

*Choose 3 of  
the 6  
candidates!*

## BRETT DUNLAP

Brett Dunlap is a Certified Wildlife Biologist and the State Director for Tennessee and Kentucky in the USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services program. Brett has served in his current position for the past 6 years. Prior to coming to Tennessee, Brett served as the Assistant State Director for the California WS program (1999-2001); District Supervisor in the Moses Lake District of the Washington WS program (1996-1999); Assistant District Supervisor of the College Station District of the Texas WS program (1994-1996); and as a Wildlife Specialist of the College Station District of the Texas WS program (1989-1994).

Brett has a B.S. in Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University, and a M.A. in Biology from Sam Houston

State University. Brett has been a member of TWS since 1989. He is a member of the Wildlife Damage Working Group and the Wildlife Disease Working Group, as well as member of the Southeast Section, and the Tennessee and Kentucky state chapters.

Brett's professional duties and interests focus on wildlife damage management, wildlife disease issues, and extension/outreach programs regarding wildlife. Brett also serves as an adjunct professor for the University of Tennessee at Martin, where he has taught a wildlife damage management course for the past 4 years. Brett's free time is mostly spent with his wife and 3 children.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOTING!

Per Working Group guidelines, voting runs for at least 30 days. Please select **3** of the 6 board member candidates. Ballots are in a separate attachment. Ballots can be filled out and e-mailed using Adobe Reader or by printing and mailing the form. Completed ballots can be returned between November 8 and December 10, 2007. Votes can be e-mailed (preferably) to [joe.n.caudell@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:joe.n.caudell@aphis.usda.gov), or they can be mailed to:

2007 WDMWG Elections  
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services  
901 West State Street  
West Lafayette, IN 47907

*Ballots are in a  
separate  
attachment!!!*

## TWS MEMBERSHIP *CONTINUED*

reason for my surprise is that our sister organizations, the American Fisheries Society (AFS) and Society of American Foresters (SAF), both require membership in the parent organization in order to participate in chapters and/or sections.

The reasons for TWS' situation appear to be complex. First, this has apparently been going on for a long time, so there is historical precedence. Second, it certainly costs quite a bit more to become a member of the parent organization compared to a section or chapter. Another possible reason is distance and lack of connection—it is certainly harder for members to feel connected to an organizational headquarters hundreds or thousands of miles away than to their local friends and colleagues. Last, but not least, some TWS section or chapter members might simply feel that the benefits of membership in the parent organization do not outweigh the costs. However, these perceptions appear to be changing. As TWS has begun to improve its membership services, embrace positive change and increase communication with its sections and chapters, one chapter (Alaska) recently voted to require membership in the parent organization. Other chapters (e.g., Texas) have not gone so far as to make it a requirement, but rather have educated and recruited so actively that the vast majority of its members are also parent-society members. While I applaud the efforts of these highly successful chapters, we obviously still have a long way to go. This started me thinking about what it means to be a member of TWS, or for that matter of any professional organization. My intent in this essay is to share some of my thoughts on what it means to be a member of TWS, including some of the many benefits that are derived from membership in professional societies. In doing so, I also touch on what it means to be a wildlife professional.

### Influencing Legislation and Public Opinion

Many individuals join professional organizations to become part of something bigger. Individuals can certainly make a difference in democratic nations. However, in today's complex and highly politicized world, effective action is often only possible when people put their collective voices together in a unified fashion. Put more simply, there is strength in numbers. TWS represents and serves thousands of wildlife professionals—the people that manage, conserve, protect and study wildlife in North America and beyond. As such, it represents the views of a community of experts. As a science-based organization that values dialogue over confrontation, TWS has the potential to

exert a powerful influence on legislation and public opinion affecting wildlife. In fact, with all of the extremism and partisan bickering going on, there is a crying need for a more reasoned, science-based approach to wildlife management and conservation. TWS is uniquely positioned to fill that niche.



Michael Hutchins, Executive Director/CEO TWS

TWS is very active in the legislative arena, commenting on pending legislation, communicating with and educating elected representatives and developing policy statements on relevant issues. TWS members are encouraged to become involved in the development of draft policy statements in their area of expertise and, when appropriate, to contribute to technical reports that provide the scientific foundations for policy development. Some of our members have expressed concern that TWS might become an "advocacy" organization. While some individuals and professional organizations do advocate for extreme, often unrealistic, positions, I have pointed out that "advocacy" itself is not a bad word. It's important that we stand for something. We are indeed and

must be advocates for a science-based, commonsensical approach to wildlife management and conservation policy. TWS also hopes to increase its exposure to the media and public within the near future by producing regular press releases and expanding its web site to include a section designed specifically for public consumption.

One of the things that initially attracted me to TWS was its courage in standing up for what wildlife professionals and wildlife really needed, such as appropriate state, provincial and federal funding for wildlife and natural resources programs; the control of feral cats and other introduced animals; a more reasoned approach to the U.S. Endangered Species Act—an approach which retains the legislation's strengths, while shoring up its weaknesses; and a recognition of the growing challenge of global climate change. TWS' ability to influence decisions on a local, national and international stage will only improve as its membership numbers grow. Numbers tend to impress elected representatives, and when we can say that TWS represents 15,000 wildlife experts instead of the current 7,000 plus, the organization's political clout will clearly grow. Simply put, our collective voice will become stronger the bigger we get. That alone should be sufficient reason to join a professional organization with which one shares common interests, values and goals.

### Information Sharing and Communication

Knowledge is power, and one of the primary functions of scientific and educational organizations like ours' is to share information. In 2007, TWS will deliver peer-reviewed scien-



## TWS MEMBERSHIP *CONTINUED*

tific and management information to its members through its technical publications, *The (new) Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Wildlife Monographs* and technical reports. The journal and monographs, including legacy publications going back to 1937, will soon be available to members online. Furthermore, TWS realizes that many of its busy, non-academic members have little time to study TWS' technical publications, but still would like to be kept up-to-date with information relevant to their profession. More specifically, they want practical, management-related information that will help them in their day-to-day work. In order to meet this demand, TWS will launch its new member magazine, *The Wildlife Professional* in early 2007. This popular publication will be a source of timely news and information on a wide variety of topics of interest to a broad range of people working in the wildlife and natural resources fields. Last, but not least, the TWS Web Site is being redesigned to become an essential source of information for wildlife professionals. Furthermore, all of TWS' information resources, both on and off-line are being fully integrated. For example, some articles published in *The Wildlife Professional* will be linked to expanded information resources on the web site.

Knowledge is also shared among members at TWS conferences and workshops. The TWS Annual Conference regularly attracts over 1,500 delegates annually, who participate in panel and roundtable discussions, paper and poster sessions, working group meetings, and training workshops.

Professional societies also have an important role in facilitating communication among their members. The installation of a new server will give TWS the capability of creating e-mail list servers for our working groups, chapters and sections, thus greatly facilitating internal communication. In addition, new web site templates are being built for chapters, sections and working groups that could also revolutionize communication at the local level. When completed, these sites will be managed at the grassroots level, with headquarters providing appropriate support through training. Informational feeds directly from headquarters to subunit sites will also be possible, thus resulting in improved communication at all organizational levels. In short, such changes will continue to bring our widely dispersed community even closer together.

### **Participation, Networking and Professional Development**

Members of professional societies are a community of experts—a group of people that have assembled due to their shared values, goals and interests. Since TWS members are wildlife students and professionals, the primary interests of our members include wildlife biology, management and conservation. TWS members value healthy and diverse ecosystems and wildlife populations and recognize that humans play a vital role in restoring and sustaining

native wildlife and natural systems. Furthermore, TWS recognizes the importance of science and education in developing sound stewardship policies. TWS members represent a broad range of expertise, ranging from wildlife ecology to land use planning to human dimensions to wildlife damage control and beyond. A wide range of organizations employs our members, including state, provincial and federal agencies, private industry, non-governmental organizations and colleges and universities. This diversity clearly is a strength, as it offers tremendous opportunities for participation, networking and professional development.

TWS offers members many opportunities for participation. Members are encouraged to either run or vote for elected offices and help shape the future of our organization. Recently, members were asked to provide input on TWS' strategic plan; they are also encouraged to participate actively in a diverse range of expert working groups that provide advice and consultation on important relevant topics, such as introduced species, urban wildlife, international wildlife management, biodiversity, and gender and ethnic diversity. Participation in local sections and chapters allows members to keep informed about relevant issues in their own communities, facilitates interactions with colleagues, and provides access to local networking and training opportunities.

Networking is often a critical component of professional development. No one ever gets to where they are without the help of others. Whether your goal is finding relevant information, locating potential collaborators, identifying a mentor, or finding your first job, relationships with colleagues can be critical. Professional societies are the ideal places to develop such connections. As a community of professionals, most TWS members are ready and willing to help colleagues when asked. Students, in particular, have much to gain from their involvement in professional organizations. An ability to meet and speak with active professionals that have similar interests can be invaluable in the early formative stages of one's career. In addition, such interactions are often the source of jobs and/or educational opportunities, such as graduate student positions or projects.

In recent years, TWS has done much to increase involvement by students, fully recognizing that they are the future of our profession. This includes the formation of a Student Professional Development Working Group and focused annual conference activities, including a grant program and volunteer opportunities to help defray the cost of attendance, a student-professional mixer, a student dinner, a "Quiz Bowl" contest and a mentoring program. Expansion of these efforts is a high priority of the new strategic plan.

But, what if you've completed your education and already have a job? Your situation may have changed, but that does not mean that your involvement with TWS should suddenly cease. Indeed, as wildlife professionals, we all have an obligation to help develop the next generation of wildlife managers, researchers and conservationists. The opportunity to

## TWS MEMBERSHIP *CONTINUED*

interact with and offer advice and assistance to student members through TWS mentoring programs can be very gratifying. Furthermore, in order to continue to be effective in a rapidly changing world, wildlife professionals must keep up-to-date with recent advances in their field of expertise or gain new skills. Workshops at the TWS annual conference can provide specialized training in a wide variety of relevant topics and TWS publications also help to keep members informed of the latest developments in the wildlife profession. TWS' Certification Program is a way for wildlife professionals to demonstrate their expertise and receive recognition for their continuing education efforts. Discussions are now underway between TWS and state and federal agencies about how certification can be made more relevant to hiring and promotional practices. In addition, work is also underway to expand certification to cover a broader range of wildlife professionals, beginning with wildlife technicians.

### **Professional Debate and Collective Problem Solving**

I've always believed in the expression "more heads are better than one." Membership in professional societies, especially those that are science-based, offers tremendous opportunities for collective thought, debate, analysis and problem solving. TWS Working Groups provide a forum for such activities, as do technical report preparation, and TWS conferences. The 2007 TWS Annual Conference in Tucson, AZ will be the first to include panel and roundtable discussions, formats specifically designed to increase opportunities for professional debate and discussion. Engaging in productive dialogue about the many complex and important issues facing wildlife professionals today is a major benefit of belonging to a community of experts. TWS is committed to taking advantage of the innovative thoughts of its diverse and highly trained constituency by facilitating such interactions. It is also committed to bringing together experts from a diverse array of relevant disciplines, as this is the crucible from which true innovation often arises. For example, TWS recently co-hosted a planning meeting for the Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration—a diverse collection of individuals dedicated to finding effective solutions to this growing and global conservation challenge. Many innovative ideas emerged for how to improve the way that wildlife professionals think about and deal with this exceedingly complex issue.

### **Professional Recognition**

Individuals that make significant contributions to their profession deserve recognition for their efforts. A critical function of professional societies is to honor such individuals accordingly. TWS has many award programs that honor excellence in the wildlife profession, including

awards for chapter and student chapter of the year, significant publications, conservation and research, educational and media efforts and so forth. The highest award given by the Society is the Aldo Leopold Memorial Award, a special honor reserved for those who have made outstanding contributions to the wildlife profession.

### **Preserving History**

The existence of professional organizations, especially long-established ones, allow their members to continue to build on the traditions established by and the many significant contributions made by those who came before them. In a sense, it allows them to better understand and participate in the history of their profession. TWS has a proud and venerable history, going back to the mid-1930's. Its membership and founders included many of the giants of the wildlife profession, such as Aldo Leopold, J.N. (Ding) Darling, and Olaus J. Murie. As in any organization or profession, change is inevitable. But the contributions of our forerunners should never be forgotten. TWS has helped to track the history of our profession and assist us in remembering what we might otherwise forget. Such continuity is comforting and reminds us that we are part of something larger than ourselves, something that began before we were here and will hopefully continue long after we are gone.

### **Ethical Codes**

Every community needs guidance on what is acceptable behavior and what is not, and this is especially important in professional communities. The credibility of an expert community can rise or fall depending on how well it addresses such issues. TWS has developed a code of ethics for certified wildlife biologists and a standardized and fair mechanism for assessing the validity of complaints when they arise.

### **Cost Sharing**

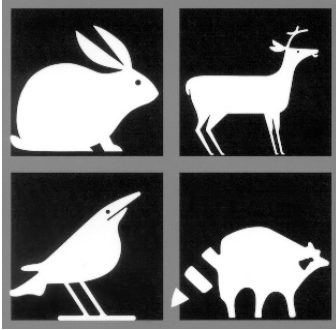
One little appreciated benefit of joining a professional organization is cost sharing. TWS could not afford to support government affairs, publication and information services or conference programs without the combined support of its members. Indeed, one incentive for growing our membership as quickly as possible is that we may eventually be able to afford to cut costs to individual members. Currently, only a small percentage of wildlife professionals are supporting these critical services for the entire community. In fact, if TWS were to double in size tomorrow, there is a good chance that we could afford to ramp up membership services and, at the same time, cut costs of membership to individuals. This is especially true if we were to improve our outside fundraising. A recent example of cost sharing by members was support for the upgrading of TWS' technological infrastruc-



Newsletter of The Wildlife Society  
Wildlife Damage Management Working Group

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## The Wildlife Society Wildlife Damage Management Working Group

### Our Mission:

The mission of the Wildlife Damage Management Working Group is to promote better understanding of the challenges of managing human-wildlife conflicts and to provide a forum for TWS members to advance their skills and knowledge of wildlife damage management practices.

### Our Goals:

- Enhance understanding within the profession and various stakeholder groups of the need for responsible wildlife damage management activities.
- Facilitate information transfer to wildlife management professionals and various publics.
- Serve as a professional catalyst, clearinghouse, and conduit for wildlife damage management information.
- Assist TWS Council and resource management agencies with wildlife damage management policy formulation, analysis, and decision making.
- Promote development of new technologies and maintenance of existing cost-effective management tools.

## TWS MEMBERSHIP CONTINUED

ture and web site, which was the focus of this year's annual member fund-raising campaign. The generous contributions of members allowed TWS to upgrade its IT infrastructure, begin overhauling its web site and digitize its legacy publications. All of these positive changes will lead to improved membership services.

### Conclusions

I began this essay by posing a couple of critical questions: What does it mean to be a TWS member and what does it mean to be wildlife professional? Furthermore, are individuals who join *only* their local chapter or section participating fully in or supporting the "community of experts" we call TWS? After reading the above essay, I leave it to you to form your own conclusions. The fact that nearly half of TWS chapter and section members do not belong to or support TWS as a whole has been a significant challenge for this organization. A recent survey also indicated that only a quarter of federal biologists belong to TWS and the proportion of state and provincial biologists may be even

lower. As we ramp up our member services, I sincerely hope that more wildlife professionals will begin to understand and appreciate the many benefits of and obligations associated with belonging to a "community of experts." I look forward to working with current members to help educate those individuals about the many positive changes taking place at our organization. TWS deserves to survive and thrive, but it cannot do so if large numbers of wildlife professionals choose to withhold their support and participation. This is *your* professional organization and Council and staff cannot face this daunting challenge alone. Existing members must help convince their colleagues that they have much to gain from joining. In other words, we both want and need them to be members of our community—a family of highly trained experts that is deeply dedicated to its core mission of ensuring a future for wildlife in a human-dominated world. That task is not going to be easy, but the more people we can convince to participate actively in TWS, the stronger and more effective we will be.