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## NEWS AND NOTES

### 1992 Annual Meeting, Nebraska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

The Nebraska Chapter of The Wildlife Society (NCTWS) held its 1992 Annual Meeting and Technical Sessions on September 30 - October 2, 1992 at the 4-H Camp near Halsey, Nebraska. The goal was to provide a forum for professionals involved with wildlife in Nebraska to discuss new advances and recent ideas in management programs, public education, research, and technology.

This year's introductory session focused on *Conservation Biology*. NCTWS President Jon D. Kauffeld introduced keynote speaker Richard L. Knight of Colorado State University, who delivered an address entitled "What's So New About Conservation Biology?" The threat of losing biological diversity has been the stimulus for the rise of this new discipline. He identified differences between wildlife biology and conservation biology and concluded with an interesting observation by Aldo Leopold on a similar situation that occurred a half-century earlier. Alan A. Steuter of the Nature Conservancy followed with a historical perspective on biological diversity in the Great Plains and a discussion on the role of humans in ecological processes.

The remaining papers discussed the results of biodiversity surveys conducted in Nebraska on National Wildlife Refuges, Sandhills fens in Cherry County, Central Platte River habitat, and an abandoned railroad right-of-way in Lancaster County. In addition, a model was presented for identifying appropriate indicator species for wet meadows. These papers were instrumental in establishing the theme of the meeting that conservation biology is an emerging field that shares a great deal of common ground with traditional wildlife biology and management.

The session on *Threatened and Endangered Species* included two presentations on black-footed ferrets (*Mustela nigripes*) and two on least terns (*Sterna antillarum*) and piping plovers (*Charadrius melodus*). The *General* session papers included discussions on population dynamics of Nebraska raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), distributions of bivalves in central Nebraska, and impacts of grazing systems on wildlife. In addition, two forensic/law enforcement videos were presented on identification of duck breast bones and fish fillets.

The closing session on *Management Programs* featured timely examples, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs on "Sandhills Habitat" and "Wingbeats over the Prairie," and the National Park Service inventory of

sensitive resources in the Niobrara River valley. Gerald E. Jasmer and G. Larry Pollard of the USDA Soil Conservation Service concluded the program with a discussion of a holistic approach to total resource conservation planning. The method incorporates a systematic evaluation of resources and a planning process that meets the objectives of land users and satisfies an environmentally-sensitive society.

Seventy-seven wildlife professionals and students participated in the annual meeting, including representatives from the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, National Park Service, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nebraska Natural Resources Districts, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Soil Conservation Service, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska at Kearney. The NCTWS Business Meeting was highlighted by the delegation of action committees, and the discussions of educational and public policy activities. Kurt C. VerCauteren, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, received the 1992 Scholarship Award.

In addition to the professional and social activities that were conducted, many participants enjoyed the recreational pursuits of canoeing, grouse hunting, and volleyball. Thursday evening's activities were capped off with an annual highlight, the "Wildlife Auction," hosted by Dick Turpin of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

The annual meeting provided a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among wildlife professionals in Nebraska. The conference addressed the importance of biological diversity and the wise use of our natural resources. Participants recognized the need to continue the promotion of professionalism within the Society and to be aware of, and responsive to, the changing needs and issues in the wildlife profession. Proceedings of the annual meeting and technical sessions can be purchased by sending \$3.00 per copy (check, purchase order, or money order) to NCTWS Proceedings, 202 Natural Resources Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583-0819.

The next NCTWS Annual Meeting will be held in October, 1993. Contact Jon D. Kauffeld (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service) or Scott E. Hygnstrom (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) for information.

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### **The Commission on Changing Rural Systems: Social and Economic Restructuring of Rural Areas**

The Commission on Changing Rural Systems met August 4-6, 1992 at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. M. Duane Nellis, Department of Geography, organized the Commission meeting attended by 78 registrants from 16 different countries. Participants delivered 49 papers on a wide variety of themes. "Social and Economic Restructuring of Rural Areas" provided the focus for the meeting. A variety of sub-themes addressed rural land use, relationships between natural resources development and the environment, farm business, social recomposition of rural areas and the built environment, rural employment, and amenity and recreational landscapes.

A field trip to Konza Prairie Research Natural Area and other rural environments in the Manhattan area opened the conference. The land reform panel included papers on organic farming, urban-rural land use conflict, land use changes associated with transportation systems, and the role of rural population change on land use structure. Presenters discussed the role of technology, environmental parameters, and policy implications at a session devoted to natural resources development and the environment.

Other topics varied widely with family farming, the implications of German reunification, rural labor markets, the role of farm women, depopulation and population redistribution, the role of tourism, and recreational development. At the conclusion of the conference, members elected Ian Bowler (University of Leicester) to replace Michael Troughton (University of Western Ontario) as chair of the Commission. Kansas State University will publish the *Proceedings of the 1992 Commission on Changing Rural Systems*.

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Department of Geography  
Kansas State University