

# THE ARIZONA WILDLIFER

2023 Issue I

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Winter Edition

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## The President's Message



AZTWS President David Bergman on a fall dove hunt

As I enter the final quarter of my term as President, I would like to take a few moments to reflect. Each one of us have met challenges head-on at work and at home. While we have moved beyond massive COVID restrictions, we are still challenged with social distancing, new cases and variants of COVID, and threats of restrictions. COVID has definitely challenged everyone's lives from maintaining a supply of PPE, such as masks, to virtual meetings, teleworking, and minimized travel. Overall, humans are very adaptable, and we have learned to survive within the pandemic.

As a reminder, the [Joint Annual Meeting](#) (JAM) will be in-person on February 2–4 at the Courtyard Marriott in Farmington, New Mexico. As of early January, we had 33 wildlife papers and 11 fisheries papers submitted with room for a few more. We also need a few moderators. If you are interested in moderating, please send an email to Brian Hickerson at [BHickerson@azgfd.gov](mailto:BHickerson@azgfd.gov). Hopefully, a number of students will be able to attend this year's meeting. To help offset the cost for students to attend, the JAM is offering volunteer opportunities at the meeting (students can make up to \$50). Students should reach out to Pilar Rinker ([pilar\\_rinker@fws.gov](mailto:pilar_rinker@fws.gov)) for more information.

After a full push to pass the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), it was not approved during the last Congress. The act

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## Presidents Message cont...

sought to dedicate \$1.3 billion in existing revenue from mineral and energy development on federal lands to the conservation of America's wildlife, fisheries, and habitats. Recent public polling demonstrated that more than 70 percent of Americans supported this bill and less than 5 percent were in opposition. The effort is not over as hundreds of conservation-interested groups, including The Wildlife Society and nine state chapters (Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas among them), pushed for the passing. Their efforts will continue to resurrect RAWA in the new Congress.

I look forward to seeing you at the JAM as we rekindle old relationships and create new friendships. I would also like to give my best to the incoming Board and Committee Chairs for the Arizona Chapter. Thank you for your support and interest in conservation, and I am especially thankful to the current Board, Committee Chairs, and our membership for their support as I end my term as President.

Sincerely,  
David Bergman

## *Join Us at the JAM!*



# ARIZONA / NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

of the American Fisheries Society

*presents*

The 56th Joint Annual Meeting of the  
Arizona-New Mexico Chapters of the American Fisheries Society and  
The Wildlife Society

**FEBRUARY 2-4, 2023**  
**COURTYARD MARRIOTT, FARMINGTON, NEW MEXICO**

### **Plenary Session:**

*Using Art in Scientific Dissemination and Public Engagement*

Plenary and Session | Workshops | Paper and Poster Presentations

### **Register Online**

For more information email  
[aznmafs@gmail.com](mailto:aznmafs@gmail.com)

Learn more and register by clicking the above announcement or by emailing [aznmafs@gmail.com](mailto:aznmafs@gmail.com)!

## Regional News

# Southwest Section Tracks

By **Kathy Granillo**  
**TWS Southwest Section Representative**

Welcome to 2023, which is the Year of the Rabbit in the Chinese Zodiac. So let's talk a little about rabbits. We have several native species in the Southwest—black-tailed and antelope jackrabbits and eastern and desert cottontails are probably the most common ones in our Section. Rabbits are non-migratory, generally living in the same home range their entire lives. Most rabbit species are doing quite well, and they are popular to hunt in many states. I think it is fair to say that most wildlife professionals think of rabbits as being of least concern when it comes to conservation. So why am I talking about rabbits? Despite being abundant, our native rabbits face many challenges in the Southwest, including an introduced disease known as rabbit hemorrhagic disease, or RHDV2. It can infect jackrabbits/hares (*Lepus*) and cottontails (*Sylvilagus*). Since it was first detected in France in 2010, RHDV2 has spread across Europe and Australia and was first confirmed in U.S. rabbit populations in April 2020, when outbreaks were identified in New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and northern Mexico, according to a report from the National Wildlife Health Center of the U.S. Geological Survey. I bring this up to highlight the interconnectedness of our world and the speed at which something like a virus from the other side of the globe can spread, even to a non-migratory species like jackrabbits.



Southwest Section Representative  
Kathy Granillo with a wolf pup.

Which brings me to the main topic of my column—International Engagement. I believe that many members think of The Wildlife Society as primarily a U.S. or North American organization. In reality, TWS has had an international presence for decades. [The Wildlife Society International Wildlife Management Working Group Recommendations for International Engagement 2020–2030](#) provided the following summary:

An international membership committee was established in 1946, led by Aldo Leopold, and the Society began the practice of appointing representatives to international organizations: the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) beginning in 1952, International Council for Bird Preservation in 1960, and the International Congress of Game Biologists in 1959. A committee on African Wildlife was briefly in place between 1960 and 1965, and the first International Relations Committee was formed in 1963 and subsequently became the International Affairs Committee. The charges of the International Affairs Committee included building relationships and cooperating with other TWS Committees, international organizations, Federal and United Nations agencies, and private foundations and expanding international membership. Between 1960 and 2000, increased global awareness of biodiversity conservation and concern over biodiversity loss emphasized the need for more international perspectives within TWS.

The Canadian Section was founded in 2007 and has been very active in TWS ever since. We are close to having a Mexico Chapter, and TWS is closely engaged in this effort. The opportunity for TWS to

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take the lead in promoting an international perspective in wildlife management practice and policy has been emphasized for more than 20 years.

One of the priorities for TWS Council this coming year is to give some priority to furthering TWS presence in international engagement. We will be reaching out to the members for input, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas.

If you have an interest in international engagement, please consider reading the [above-mentioned report](#) from the International Wildlife Management Working Group. It contains several detailed recommendations based on an extensive survey conducted in 2019 as well as a wealth of other information on international engagement.

I plan to attend the 2023 Joint Annual Meeting. Please feel free to talk with me there about this topic or any other topic that you'd like. I welcome the interaction and look forward to seeing many of you in person!

Also, please feel free to email me at any time about any issue—[KGBirder55@gmail.com](mailto:KGBirder55@gmail.com).

Sincerely,  
Kathy

## **SAVE THE DATE**

### **APRIL 22, 2023**

## **AZTWS WILDLIFE TECHNIQUES WORKSHOP**

It's back! Students and early professionals, join us for a one-day workshop to get hands-on experience with a variety of wildlife field techniques, including survey, capture, and telemetry—and much more! This is also a great opportunity to learn and to network with professionals and peers. Details coming soon.

For more information, contact Holly Hicks at [hhicks@azgfd.gov](mailto:hhicks@azgfd.gov).

# Our Neck of the Woods...

## The Winter Rattlesnakes

*By Bryan Hughes, founder and owner of Rattlesnake Solutions*



Western diamond-backed rattlesnakes observed on a cold, rainy winter night. Credit: Bryan Hughes, Rattlesnake Solutions

If you would have told me 10 years ago that I would be excitedly heading out in driving rain to look for rattlesnakes on a near-freezing winter night, I'd think you're crazy. But that's exactly what I did on December 9, 2021.

The conditions I had been waiting for finally materialized: the first substantial rainfall after the dry post-monsoon period. For a few hours each year, rattlesnakes emerge en masse from hibernacula to coil in the rain and drink—all at once, seemingly regardless of time or temperature. This particular night, the temperature on my Kestrel read 38°F.

It's taken years of observation to isolate the exact triggers that cause these mass hydration events. The long learning curve is primarily due to the fact that there is really only one primary event each year to study these phenomena. A small group of us have started to coordinate our observations at different parts of the Phoenix metropolitan area, with various species, to try to accelerate our learning.

The other factor is bias. Every snake-finding bone in my body protested as I put my backpack on over a winter coat at 10 p.m. in heavy, cold rain. In previous years' attempts, even while looking directly at a rattlesnake in such conditions, it feels ridiculous.

This year, I was looking at two factors. Will they emerge at night, and how much rain is enough to trigger the event? My plan was to show up to a communal den of western diamond-backed rattlesnakes

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Credit: Bryan Hughes, Rattlesnake Solutions

in advance of the rain, then “run laps” around it in the rain until I either started finding snakes or learned that my predictions were wrong.

The first few “laps” produced nothing. However, once the rain really picked up, I found myself looking at what I had hoped for: a rattlesnake crawling out of a rock pile. I took photos and collected data with numb fingers and moved on. A short distance away, I found another. Over the next hour or so, I found a total of 19 western diamond-backed rattlesnakes of all age classes. For the Phoenix-metro area, this is a substantial den.

I could have found more, and no doubt kept at it all night, but my clothes were soaked completely through and I was showing early signs of hypothermia. I had learned what I wanted to and was satisfied to go home. Yes, they will still come up at night, and the amount of rain likely needs to be sustained ground-penetrating rain, as opposed to surface-wetting light rain.

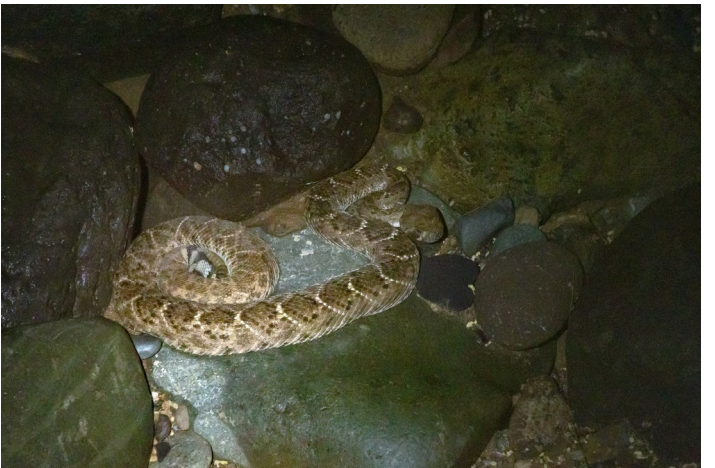
This winter rain rattlesnake emergence is special to me. It creates a feeling similar to my earliest rattlesnake-finding attempts, driving out into the desert at night without a clue of what I might find and where I will go.

As I write this, it’s the last day of November, and this is on my mind today. The forecast is calling for heavy rain on Saturday night sometime around midnight, with temperatures plunging to the low 30s. My raincoat and a pot of coffee are ready to go. This time, I am bringing gloves.



Credit: Bryan Hughes, Rattlesnake Solutions





Six of the 19 western diamond-backed rattlesnakes observed on a cold, rainy winter night in 2021. Rattlesnakes brumate over winter, rather than hibernate, and may become active under the right conditions. Credit: Bryan Hughes, Rattlesnake Solutions



# SHARE YOUR AZ WILDLIFE STORIES

Want to share your Arizona wildlife stories and perspectives? Please consider submitting **articles, stories, project updates, events, and pictures** for upcoming newsletters! AZTWS welcomes all contributors.

### *The Arizona Wildlifer* Deadlines

Issue	Deadline
<b>Spring 2023</b>	<b>Mar 17, 2023</b>
<b>Summer 2023</b>	<b>Jun 16, 2023</b>

Email submissions at any time to [aztwseeditor@gmail.com](mailto:aztwseeditor@gmail.com).

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## Continuing Education Grants

AZTWS offers \$1,500 annually in [Continuing Education Grants](#) to its members (including professionals, graduate and undergraduate students) to support education and career advancement opportunities. Grant requests should not exceed \$500 per application and only one grant is awarded per person, per year. Grants are limited to current Chapter members only; membership dues are \$6/year. Join or renew [here](#).



Applications can be submitted at any time and will be reviewed quarterly by the Continuing Education Committee. Applicants will be notified within 30 days of the Committee's review. The Committee evaluates applications based on your explanation of how the activity will enhance your career development, your financial need, your efforts to obtain supplemental funding, and your involvement in Chapter activities. AZTWS encourages applicants from under-represented individuals and groups.

**Submit Your  
Application [Online](#)**





# BioBlitz

## Join the AZ BioBlitz Hub!

Are you a facilitator of other BioBlitz or citizen science events across the state? Are you interested in becoming more involved in BioBlitz events in Arizona? Join the Arizona BioBlitz Hub! The Arizona BioBlitz Hub establishes opportunities for sharing resources and connections between facilitators of BioBlitz events and other citizen science efforts. The goal is to maximize the quality, engagement, and outputs of our respective BioBlitz endeavors across the state while building a community of interested individuals and organizations. Through a strong network of professionals and community members, we can encourage advocacy for Arizona flora and fauna while collecting data and making scientific experiences more accessible to everyone! Scan the QR code to [register for the AZ BioBlitz Hub](#). All are welcome!



## Interested in a Leadership Role with AZTWS?

AZTWS has open vacancies for Chair Committee positions. Join us and make a difference in your Arizona wildlife community. The following positions are available:

1. ***Conservation Affairs Chair*** — This position includes review of regulatory, planning, environmental, and other issues related to wildlife and their habitat in Arizona. Duties include soliciting, recommending, and preparation of materials related to conservation issues. The Chair is also responsible for an annual summary of conservation affairs to be distributed in the AZTWS Annual Report.
2. ***Events and Opportunities Chair*** — This position involves acquiring information related to events and opportunities that may be of interest of Chapter members and distributing them to committee members in charge of Chapter outreach.

Please contact us at [aztws@gmail.com](mailto:aztws@gmail.com) to inquire.





California condors—North America's largest aerial bird and one of its most endangered—hang out and about the Navajo Bridge over the Colorado River in Marble Canyon, thanks to a multi-organization conservation reintroduction program. Credit: B. Blais





## *AZTWS News & Resources*

The [Arizona Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) is dedicated to promoting sound management and conservation of Arizona's wildlife resources and strives to be the preeminent resource for Arizona's community of scientists, managers, educators, students, technicians, planners, and others working to manage and conserve wildlife and habitats in the state. To help you keep up with AZTWS's resources, opportunities, and happenings, we hope that you find the following hotlinks useful:

- **Members** gain access to numerous opportunities; if you are not yet a member, sign up [here](#). Annual dues are only \$6!
- **AZTWS's Web Store** is live! Show your support by gifting cool AZTWS swag to others (or splurging for yourself). Proceeds support AZTWS resources, including conference events and our Continuing Education Grant. [Shop now!](#) [You can also support AZTWS's Mission by [donating](#) discretely or in monthly recurrences.]
- Support others and help increase representation in Arizona's natural resource fields by **gifting a AZTWS membership** (1-year) – [details here](#).
- Looking for that older issue of *The Arizona Wildlifer*? **All issues** are freely accessible [here!](#)
- Our parent society, TWS, emphasizes important resources for **[diversity, equity, and inclusion](#)** throughout the wildlife profession. AZTWS also strives to uphold these values.
- Want to get more involved with your Chapter? Check out the information available on our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [website](#) for opportunities.
- AZTWS has vacancies for several Committee Chair positions. See [page 9](#) for details.
- Have questions for us? Contact us [here](#).



A crescent moon welcomes an Arizona sunset. Credit: Scott Sprague

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