

THE ARIZONA WILDLIFER

2015 Issue I

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Winter Edition

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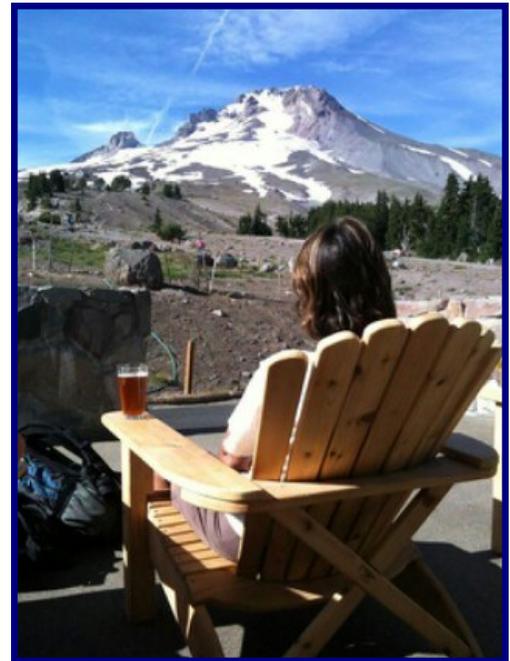
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The President's Message

My term as AZTWS President will be coming to an end this February. It's been a great experience, these last two years, as President-Elect and as President. I have learned a lot about the Wildlife Society and its role helping professionals and students. If I can give some career advice to those of you who are students hoping to break into the wildlife career or new professionals



trying to move up the ladder; volunteer for a leadership position. It puts you in the spotlight, allows you to exercise your leadership skills, and network with mentors and peers. Elections are coming up soon so if you are interested in a Board position please contact Melanie Culver, President-Elect, at mculver@email.arizona.edu. We also are looking for help to put together the 2015 JAM in Arizona.

Now is the time to register for the JAM in New Mexico. AZTWS will also be having a social on Thursday night where you can meet other professionals in the AZTWS Chapter. Hope to see you there.

Natalie Robb, AZTWS Chapter President

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AZTWS>

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Regional News:

Highlights from SW Section Representative to TWS Council

By: Carol Chambers



Happy holidays all!

Conferences. If you attended the Pittsburgh conference you were one of 1,552 participants that made this a successful event. Get your passports ready now the 2015 conference in Wininpeg, Manitoba, Canada (October 17-21). The call for proposals is out with deadline of February 6 for workshops, symposia, panel discussions, and special poster sessions (<http://wildlife.org/22nd-annual-conference-of-the-wildlife-society/>). There's another opportunity for international travel to the Fifth International Wildlife Management Congress (<http://iwmc2015.org/>) coming up July 26-30, 2015, in Sapporo, Japan. The theme of the IWMC2015 is "International Models of Wildlife Biology and Management: Beyond Cultural Differences." Both cities also have great wildlife-watching opportunities.

Publications and Communications. Nancy Sasavage (Nancy.Sasavage@wildlife.org) joined TWS in October as the Director of Publications and Communications and Editor-in-Chief of The Wildlife Professional. She has extensive experience in developing and managing print and digital communications and served as editor of a monthly news magazine. Nancy has worked with hundreds of expert authors throughout her career and is excited to join her interest in wildlife with her scientific editorial expertise. Nancy has a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Michigan State University. Joshua Learn has is our new science writer. Josh has a M.S. in journalism and a B.A. in cultural anthropology, extensive writing experience in wildlife issues. Dana Kobilinsky, our new editorial intern has a bachelors in mass communication. She completed an internship with Defenders of Wildlife prior to joining TWS. Cassie Martin, our current science writer, is leaving TWS to work as a writer with Oceans at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The TWS website (<http://wildlife.org/>) has a new look and right now is featuring us! See the article on the Woman of Wildlife (WOW) SW Section event organized by SW Section President Leland Pierce (<http://wildlife.org/southwest-section-wows-us/>). For those interested in hearing the event, it was recorded and you can access it using the following information: Playback Number: 605/562-0029, Meeting ID: 634-775-555, Reference Number: 1. The call is 83 minutes long and features a Q&A session with the Director of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Alexandra Sandoval and a panel discussion from the authors of "Glass Ceilings and Institutional Biases: A closer look at barriers facing women in science and technical fields."

The weekly eWildlifer, available to TWS members only, is now launched and replaces the Wildlifer and Wildlife Policy News. The eWildlifer includes links to previous week's stories, a Quiz Bowl question, announcements, and weekly wildlife photo you can save as desktop background. You'll also find previews and selected articles from The Wildlife Professional in the eWildlifer.

Native American Working Group. TWS worked with Michel Kohl and Serra Hoagland (AZ) of the Native People's Wildlife Management Working Group to support 10 Native American students at the Pittsburgh conference. Individuals selected for this program received grants to help cover registration fees, lodging, meals and transportation to attend and participate in the annual conference. Check out more activities at <http://wildlife.org/network/tws-local/working-groups/>.

Government Affairs. TWS Government Affairs staff released a new policy resource, the Policy Brief Series on the website. Six policy briefs are available for members to download and use to educate themselves and others on various federal policies related to wildlife. This resource and all other policy

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Regional News cont.

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resources are available at www.wildlife.org/policy.

Membership. Renew your membership now if you haven't already. We are at 9242 members, close to our highest point of 10,000+. Review membership benefits at <http://wildlife.org/membership-benefits/>. Strong membership supports the changes we want to make at state, section, and national levels. We are also continuing The 1,000 Campaign. Development efforts to date have raised \$56,240. We are considering restructuring Student Conclaves, expanding them from 5 to 8 beginning 2016 to align a conclave with each TWS Section. What are your thoughts on this?

Social Media. The TWS Facebook page currently has over 22,000 likes and is a great way to get news. You can join 256 others by liking us at The Wildlife Society Southwest Section Chapters Hub (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Wildlife-Society-Southwest-Section-Chapters-Hub/205755042835210>). The TWS Women of Wildlife (WOW) Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/TWS-Women-of-Wildlife/234411723382592>) is now at 926 likes, up from 863 in December.

Remember that you are or could be one of the almost 10,000 members TWS national. Contact me at Carol.Chambers@nau.edu or 928-523-0014 (office) with any comments or questions.



TWS President Rick Baydack and members of the Japanese delegation discuss the Vth International Wildlife Management Congress (Sapporo Japan, 2015) at the 2014 Pittsburgh TWS Council meeting.

John Koprowski Named Wildlife Society Fellow

John L. Koprowski, Professor of Wildlife and Fisheries Science in the School of Natural Resources & the Environment, was named a Fellow of The Wildlife Society at the annual meeting of the 8,000



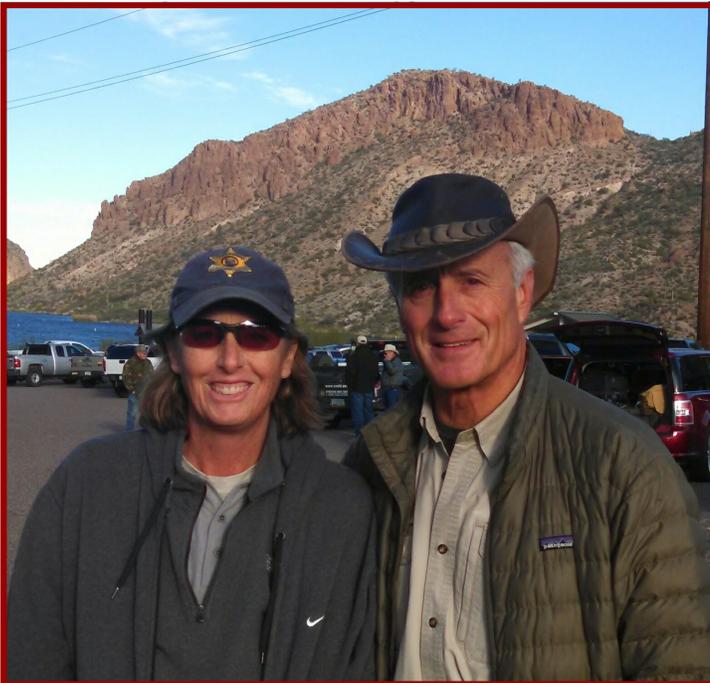
member society in Pittsburgh from 25 to 29 October 2015. This award recognizes members who have distinguished themselves through exceptional service to the wildlife profession. Dr. Koprowski has served in numerous roles within the society at the state and national levels, produced over 120 publications including 3 books, and has enjoyed teaching undergraduate and graduate students in ecology, conservation, and management courses for 22 years as a faculty member, including the last 14 at the University of Arizona. TWS Fellows serve as ambassadors of The Wildlife Society and as such are encouraged to engage in outreach and other activities that will benefit and promote TWS and the wildlife profession. TWS Fellows are appointed for life. Congratulations John.



Our Neck of The Woods...

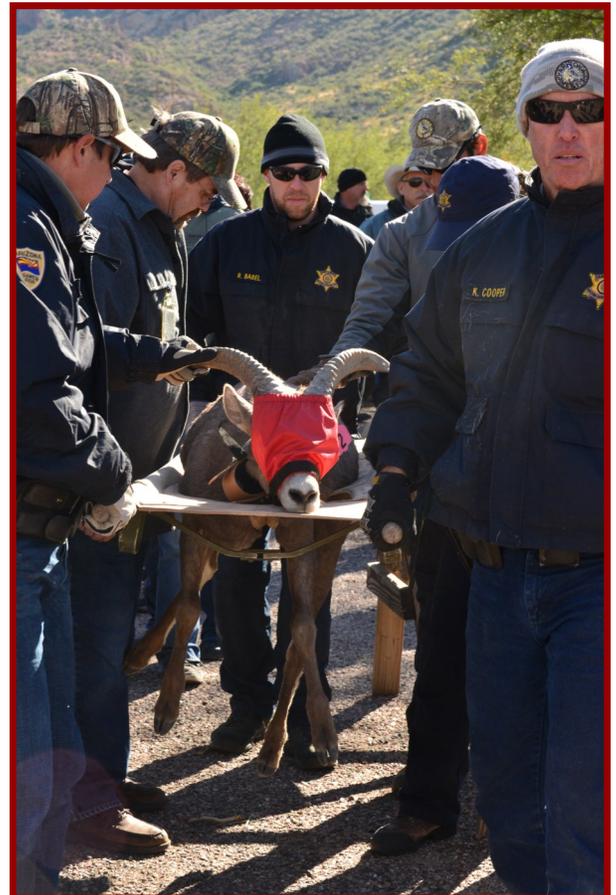
Translocating Desert Big Horn Sheep to the Santa Catalina Mountains

By Natalie Robb, Arizona Game and Fish Department



Natalie Robb and Jack Hanna

This November 19 and 20, the Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) captured 23 ewes and 7 rams from the Superstition Mountains near Canyon Lake and the Plomosa Mountains near Yuma. The sheep will be moved to the Pusch Ridge area of the Santa Catalina Mountains, near Tucson, to supplement the 12 remaining sheep that were reintroduced there in November 2013. The Depart-



ment's goal is to have a viable population of about 100 desert big horn sheep once again in the Santa Catalina Mountains. Big horn sheep have not been seen in the Catalina's since 1995. The sheep's gradual decline is thought to be due to habitat encroachment, human disturbance, habitat degradation due to fire suppression, and predation by mountain lions.

I had the opportunity to help with the sheep capture, as part of the Mesa Region at Canyon Lake, along with Jack Hanna's film crew and numerous volunteers. It is a huge operation to move sheep from one mountain range to another. The captures entail a lot of planning and work, but for everyone involved they

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Santa Catalina Big Horn Sheep cont...

(Continued from page 4)



are also Incredibly Fun! When I think of the highlights of my 18 years in the Arizona Game and Fish Department, I think of the few times I spent in the helicopter capturing big horn sheep. The first time that I was a mugger, I was a rookie, fresh out of the Academy and that was the first time that I knew I had the best job in the world.

Catching big horn sheep requires a helicopter, an incredibly skilled helicopter pilot, a net gunner, a mugger, and a lot of ground support. The net gunner shoots a rifle which projects a net over the sheep. The net gunner has hours and hours of practice and experience. The better the net gunner is, the less stress caused to the running sheep, and there is less chance of causing the ship to have an accident. To become a net gunner, you must train under a more experienced net gunner. The mugger is usually a Wildlife Manager who is willing and fit...and a little into adrenaline.

The pilot flies the ship over sheep habitat, which is the steepest, nastiest and dangerous terrain there is. When the sheep is spotted, the pilot flies fast and low to get as close to the sheep as safely possible while the net gunner aims to shoot the net over the sheep. The sheep almost always run from the ship and sometimes will stand still and hide behind cover making it more difficult. To give you some perspective, while the gunner is aiming to shoot the net over the sheep, the mugger is stepping out of the ship, onto the skid, preparing to step onto the ground. The mugger is also helping the pilot watch for trees or saguaros that the helicopter could collide with...yes, you are that low.

As soon as the net hits its mark, the pilot lowers the ship close enough to the ground, without landing, so the mugger can step onto the ground. The mugger then runs to the sheep, holds it onto the

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Santa Catalina Big Horn Sheep cont...

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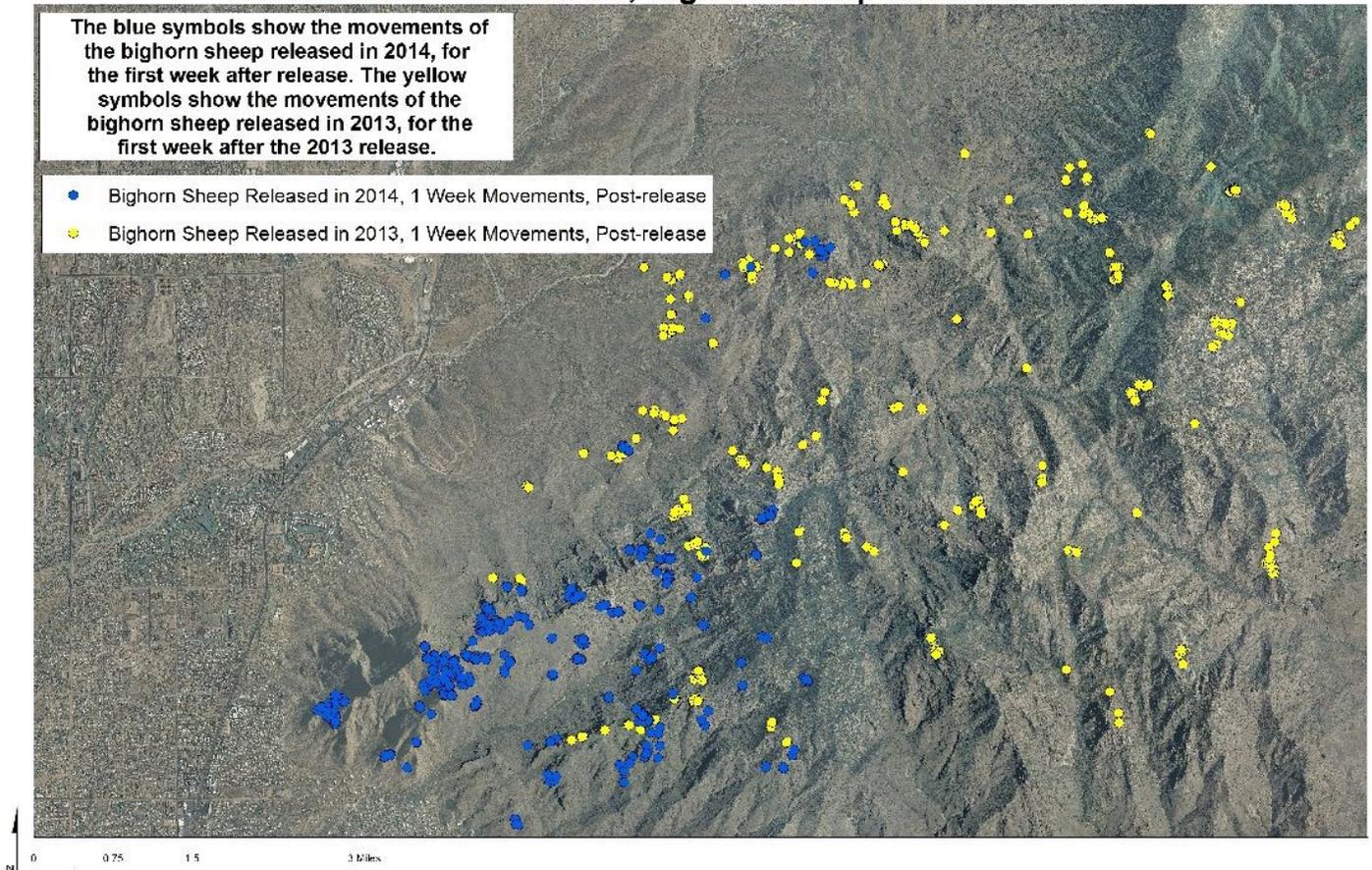
ground, covers it's eyes to reduce stress, and then hobbles it (secures its legs with straps so it can't kick or run). The mugger puts the body of the sheep in a canvas bag, ties it closed, and lifts it's 100 plus pound body into a hovering helicopter while trying to ensure he or she isn't sliding off a cliff at the same time. The sheep is then taken to the staging area, where its temperature is monitored, blood samples are taken, it is vaccinated, ear tagged and GPS collared. It is loaded into a trailer with other captured sheep until the next day when it will be released at its new home, the Santa Catalinas.

When I mugged the first time, it was an incredible rush. Fifteen years later, this November, it was a little different for me. It still was one of the best times I have had in my career. But with age, came a deeper awareness of just how dangerous these captures are to the personnel in the helicopter, and just how long it would take me to heal if I hurt myself compared to a younger person. I feel lucky that I had the opportunity to do it but now I will leave it the younger Wildlife Managers. The people that help with these captures time after time deserve recognition for their ability and the risk they take for wildlife of Arizona.

Santa Catalina Mountains, Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction

The blue symbols show the movements of the bighorn sheep released in 2014, for the first week after release. The yellow symbols show the movements of the bighorn sheep released in 2013, for the first week after the 2013 release.

- Bighorn Sheep Released in 2014, 1 Week Movements, Post-release
- Bighorn Sheep Released in 2013, 1 Week Movements, Post-release



Student Activities at AZ-NM Joint Annual Meeting

By Heather Bateman, Arizona State University
Quentin Hays, Eastern New Mexico University

This October at the Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society in Pittsburgh, student participation was at an all-time high, accounting for nearly 50% of all registrants. Attending local, regional, or national conferences is an excellent way for students to meet and interact with professionals and future employers in the natural resources field, and to present and receive feedback on their research. Locally, each winter, students and professionals in the Southwest look forward to attending the Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) of the AZ and NM TWS and American Fisheries Society Chapters.

There are several exciting events geared toward students at JAM 2015, which will take place in Las Cruces, NM, February 5th through 7th. During the first day of the conference, students can attend workshops on Interview and Resume Building (free), Reptile Enforcement (free), and Program R (\$25). In the evening many students will compete in the Second Annual JAM Quiz Bowl (free) – a fun and exciting event where student teams engage in a wildlife and fisheries trivia contest. The competition was held at JAM for the first time last year and drew such a large crowd that this year it will take place in the San Andres Ballroom at the Hotel Encanto. Professionals and other non-contestants are invited to attend – cheering is allowed!

Additionally, The Student/Mentor Lunch (\$5) on Friday, February 6th should prove to be a great opportunity for students to meet and engage with wildlife and fisheries professionals from a variety of institutions, organizations, and government entities. Students will be provided the opportunity to interact and receive practical advice from faculty at several universities, as well as wildlife professionals from the private sector, conservation groups, and federal and state agencies. Mentorship often proves to be critical to success as students undertake graduate studies, or venture into the professional world for the first time.

For the many students who have been working hard on independent research projects, there are talks and poster sessions where students can present their work. Awards will be given for the best student talk and poster in both wildlife and fisheries. To support students who want to attend JAM discounted registration is available in exchange for volunteering at the event. Volunteers may assist at the registration table or during technical sessions. Students interested in volunteering should contact Krysten Zummo (zumokm@nmsu.edu). Students interested in forming a Quiz Bowl team need 3 or 4 team members; only two teams per school are allowed. Interested Quiz Bowl teams should contact Dr. Heather Bateman for registration information



Heather and Quentin congratulating the first JAM Quiz Bowl Champs from NMSU in 2014.

BAMBI GAVE ME THE SLIP

Why Hunt Success Shouldn't Be Measured in Meat and Antlers

By Brittany Oleson

"Shhhh, be vewy vewy quiet...we're hunting whitetails!" Spirits were as high as the mercury as I did my best Elmer Fudd impression on our hot sunrise hike from camp. It was the first day of my first rifle deer hunt, and I wasn't going to let the exceptionally warm October weather get me down. My buddy Robert had taken a few



bucks from the area before, so I eagerly followed him out to one of his favorite spots. Robert was pointing out different grass species along the way, quietly whispering their taxonomic names. "Give it up," I thought. I suck at identifying grasses. As we quietly settled into the hillside and began to glass the dense north-facing slopes, I thought about all of the delicious steaks and summer sausages I was going to get out of my deer. Maybe I would make a cape out of the hide...

Suddenly, we heard the crunching of grass and twigs behind us. Robert grabbed the rifle, my heart started pounding, and I listened so hard I thought I could hear the blood rushing through the tiny vessels in my ears. The soft sounds of something rooting through the brush continued, and then split into two sources. Could these be our two bucks? Could we really fill both of our tags on the first morning? A faint breeze carried a familiar scent past my nose: javelina. I slowly turned my head towards the sound, which was getting closer. An adult javelina appeared from under a bush and walked down a faint game trail directly towards me...with two tiny babies in tow! She stopped within a few feet of me and held her nose in the air, huffing and trying to figure out why she could smell something weird but not see something weird. I could feel her breath on my face, and began to question the wisdom of being so well camouflaged. She leapt off the trail and stomped down the hill, leaving her fussing pint-sized pecclets within arm's reach of me (a very tempting distance). As the little reds wrestled and squealed

down the slope, papa javelina joined them from behind us. We watched the family parade through the brush, and I forgot to be disappointed that they weren't deer.

We moved to a different spot for the afternoon and Robert spotted a nice buck as it disappeared into some junipers. I watched the slope intently through my binoculars. For hours. I made an awesomely ornate grass wreath. Robert took a nap. I picked zillions of long black seeds off of my soft camouflage pants and vowed to learn the name of the horrible plant so I could use it as an insult to my greatest enemies. The sun set behind the hills and we hiked back to camp in the dark. I

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Bambi cont...

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had learned a very important lesson about hunting whitetail in the southwest: it takes a lot of patience.

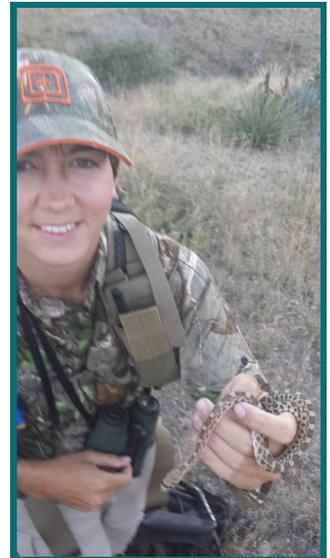
By the time we settled back into our spot on the second day, I had learned another lesson about hunting: the silence and camouflage afforded by the soft fabric of my fancy hunting pants was not quite worth the annoyance of having thousands of seeds stuck to my legs. I looked like a hedgehog. A miserably itchy hedgehog. Robert pointed out a few pale three-bristled seeds on my pants, which were greatly outnumbered by the long black seeds, and explained that they were from a type of *Aristida* called three-awn. That knowledge nugget didn't really help my mood, and definitely didn't make me hate grasses any less. We had positioned ourselves to see the saddle the buck had moved through on the previous day, hoping he would again come through that area. We were deeply focused on glassing when a thunderous boom rang out from the other side of the canyon. Our buck had been bedded in the junipers next to the saddle, out of our view, and a hunter with a long-range rifle on the other side of the canyon quite literally shot him right out from under us. We gathered our packs, and our frustrations, and moved to a different area.

The excitement level spiked late that afternoon when we spotted another buck bedded under a juniper high up on a hill several hundred yards away. We hugged the contours of the steep slopes and snuck ninja-style to within a few hundred yards. We were still too far out for a shot, and as we evaluated our options we realized it would be dark before we were able to get into a good shooting position. We decided not to risk spooking the buck and planned to return to the area in the morning. As we quietly turned around to hike in the setting sun, a doe on the opposite slope slipped silently through the golden *Aristida* in search of some evening forage. Oh hey look, I learned a grass.

That was the end of the bucks for our hunt. The following days produced numerous does and fawns, but the boys were suddenly absent. Occasional shots ringing through the canyons suggested that a few hunters in the area were successful, or perhaps were just shooting their rifles in frustration. We hiked for miles and glassed for countless hours. I identified robberflies and *Argiopes* for Robert, and he pointed out spruce-top grama and side-oats grama for me. I caught a juvenile gophersnake, and when we found a cranky western diamondback rattlesnake one night I told Robert it was his turn to catch it. He didn't agree. We argued about whether or not crickets are gross (I think they're adorable) and discovered that grasshoppers enjoy strawberry Greek yogurt. We found that we frequently had good reception on our cell phones as we sat glassing on the slopes, and took shifts researching different things online. Did you know that mule deer legs were once used to test boots for land-mine technicians? At one point I found myself on the Coues Whitetail Forum looking at photos of the deer harvested by other hunters during opening week. Actually, that really didn't do much good for morale.

After six days, it was finally the last day of the hunt. I leaned back on my pack and listened to a grasshopper munch on the wood fibers of my agave stalk walking stick. I had been watching two does and a fawn forage and nap on the opposing slope for hours. The zillions of fruit flies that had been assaulting my ears and nose for the entire hunt were mysteriously gone. A kestrel landed on a nearby agave stalk, and the warm sun began to set. The hunt was over and we had no deer. I met up with Robert, who had been glassing from a nearby hill, and we began the long hike back to camp in the dark.

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Bambi cont...

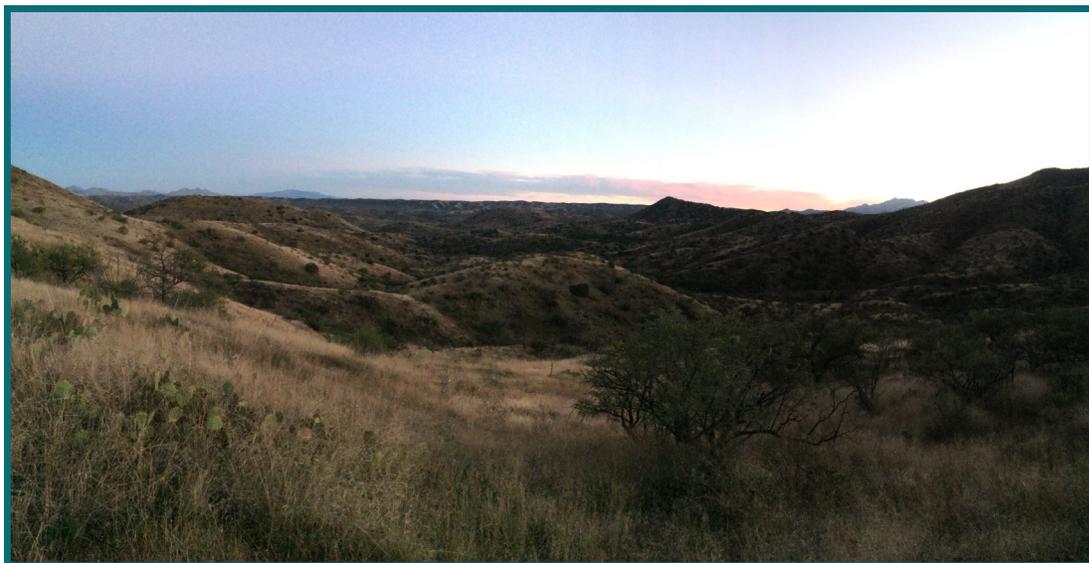
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We spent the first part of the hike in darkness, using only ambient light to travel down a dense, steep, rocky wash. When we ran into a beautiful black-tailed rattlesnake, we decided having a headlamp was probably a good idea with venomous critters out in the warm weather. We watched a stripe-tailed scorpion scurry across a rock, and followed tiny tracks in the sand until we found the distressed pinacate beetle at the other end, with its stinky black butt thrust straight up into the air. At some point, Robert asked if I wanted to keep hiking through the wash or cut up the rocky slope to an old ATV trail. "Let's stay in the wash! I want to find a ringtail!"

We rounded a bend and saw a bright glowing object about 30 yards away. Thinking it was the headlamp of an immigrant, Robert politely addressed it in Spanish: "¿Como esta?" There was no response, but the glowing object moved slightly. Robert addressed it a second time. At that point I realized the glowing object was two small glowing objects very close together. Eyes! We hurried over to discover what kind of animal we had encountered, and that's when we saw the fluffy black and white tail of a ringtail on the branch of a tree. I tried to hold back my emotions but all I could say was "awwww!" and make those weird squealy noises that girls often make in the presence of something ridiculously cute. Ringtails have long been a favorite of mine and I had never been able to observe one so close, or for so long, in the wild. Well, there was that dead one I found on the road...Anyways, we used our binoculars and headlamps to verify that it was indeed as fat, fluffy, and adorable as it had appeared from a distance. I reminded myself that I could not legally possess the furball, and we continued on our way.

Did I mention it was a long hike back to camp? Somewhere in the chaos of ringtails and rattlesnakes, and Argiopes and Aristidas, we had managed to miss our "exit" from the wash and onto the hiking trail that would take us back to camp. We did a lot of backtracking and eventually found ourselves on our hiking trail, plodding along towards camp.

We arrived back to our tents late in the starry night, cracked open a few cold glass bottles of Mexican Coke, and recounted the week we had just completed. I was disappointed that we didn't fill our deer tags, but was careful not to confuse our hunt with one that was "unsuccessful." Hunting isn't just about tagging your animal; hunting is about getting outside and discovering the amazing natural world all around you. I begrudgingly learned some new grass species, and Robert learned that robberflies have painful bites. We learned that ringtails don't speak Spanish, and that those horrible black seeds belong to a group of noxious Asters called beggarticks (*Bidens bigelovii*). You see, even though I didn't tag a deer, I learned a lot about hunting for deer. I still have my archery permit for December, and I hope to put my new knowledge to use if I can get a few days off for a winter hunt. Hmm... I should probably get a book about grass.



Arizona Chapter Conservation Affairs Committee

By Jon Hanna, Committee Chairperson

Policy Brief Series – TWS's Government Affairs Team has developed the [Policy Brief Series](#), a valuable resource on federal policies and programs regarding conservation. Each policy brief outlines key provisions in a particular policy and discusses its current status including recent appropriations and ongoing debates to alter the legislation. The *Policy Brief Series* is an excellent resource for the Conservation Affairs Network and TWS members advocating for federal programs with their legislators. We encourage the Conservation Affairs Network to use the *Policy Brief Series* as educational tools for students, prospective members, and legislators. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

This year has been groundbreaking for the Society in the development and compilation of many resources for our members, and now we should take advantage of this valuable opportunity to become more involved in conservation policy or management. There may be several areas in the state where our members could benefit wildlife with additional input from our Chapter's Conservation Affairs Committee. If you have a resource issue that could use additional influence from the perspective of our Committee, please contact me (moremuledeer@gmail.com). I will plan on focusing on at least one issue this coming year where the Committee can focus resources on improving an outcome for wildlife in policy or land management decisions.

Colorado River Terrestrial and Riparian (CRTR) Meeting Announcement

The Colorado River Terrestrial and Riparian (CRTR) meeting will once again be held in Laughlin, Nevada at Harrah's Casino. The meeting will start in the morning of Tuesday, January 27th and go until mid-day of Thursday the 29th of January.

The CRTR meeting is for anyone doing work on or related to the Lower Colorado River watershed in natural resources research, conservation, or restoration. There is no charge to attend and it is open to everyone regardless of affiliation (state and federal government, private sector, etc.). Lodging is not provided, nor is a specific set of rooms reserved; however, rooms are always available in Laughlin and usually quite inexpensive.

AZTWS Continuing Education Grant

Applications may be submitted at any time and will be reviewed quarterly by the Committee in January, April, July, and October. Applicants will be notified of the Committee's decision within 30 days of the Committee's review. The Continuing Education 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. Total available grant amounts are limited to \$2,000 per year with the maximum individual grant capped at \$1,000. Grants are limited to Chapter members. Grant application forms are available on the Chapter WebPages at www.aztws.org, or may be obtained from the Chairman of the Continuing Education Committee, Darren Julian (djulian@azgfd.gov).

Standing Invitation!

Submit your valued co-workers and partners for one of our Chapter Awards (see criteria at <http://wildlife.org/Arizona>, then click on "Awards"). Let's recognize our finest! Submit your nominations to our President Elect, Melanie Culver (mculver@email.arizona.edu).

Also: Please consider becoming active with the Chapter as an officer or board member. Again, contact Melanie Culver (mculver@email.arizona.edu) to register your interest. We'd love to have you on our board!



We need articles, stories and pictures for upcoming newsletters.

The Arizona Wildlifer Deadlines

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Spring 2015	Mar 13, 2015
Summer 2015	Jun 12, 2015

Email submissions to: aztwseeditor@gmail.com

48th JOINT ANNUAL MEETING

Hotel Encanto, Las Cruces,
New Mexico

February 5-7, 2015

The Southwest Section will be hosting a Section Meeting during the JAM. Check the program for details.

To register for the JAM, please visit the registration website:

www.2015JAM.eventzilla.net



Photo credit: Audrey Owens