

THE ARIZONA WILDLIFER

2016 Issue 4

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Fall Edition

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The President's Message

Greetings and salutations.

One of the most important things that all levels of The Wildlife Society does is help guide and prepare the next generation of wildlife professionals. Every TWS event I attend promotes student interactions with professionals. So I

have often talked to students about how I got to be where I am and what I think is important as they prepare to enter the field. Regardless of whether they happen around campfires at the Techniques Workshop, in between bites of pulled-pork BBQ at JAM mentor luncheons, during snow delays at a deer capture, from behind a career fair podium, or sitting at Up the Creek's bar after a long day of chasing snakes, my conversations with aspiring and rookie wildlifers follow some common threads. I figured this newsletter is a good place to get some of those thoughts down in case they might be helpful to anyone out there.

The most important thing I can say to anyone looking to get a wildlife job is to engage other professionals and get their thoughts too. No two hiring supervisors see resumes, interviews, or candidates from exactly the same perspective. Keep that disclaimer in mind as you read through the rest of this and talk to other biologists to get as many thoughts as you can.

I often get asked what makes someone a good candidate for an entry-level wildlife job. Most supervisors look for four characteristics when considering intern or technician candidates. The specifics of the job will dictate which is the most critical, but, regardless of the order, they're all important. Supervisors want to have confidence that the people they hire 1) will make it back from the field, 2) are going to be compatible with other team members, 3)



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Presidents Message cont...

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have the aptitude to learn whatever skillset is needed to perform the required duties, and 4) will display the dedication and enthusiasm for the resource that allows wildlifers to excel.

If the position includes any level of field work, some version of “will this person survive out there?” is going to be running through the head of folks involved in the hiring process. More than one question in the interview may seek to determine field experience and survival know-how, particularly relative to situations when things start to go bad. But many wildlife positions are so competitive that you may not get an interview if your application package doesn’t establish experience with physically demanding conditions. So if you have spent significant time hiking, backpacking, rock-climbing, kayaking, mountain-biking, hunting, or doing other strenuous outdoor recreation activities, make sure your resume reflects that experience. Alternatively, manual labor experience (particularly outdoor jobs like construction or agriculture), military service, and even organized sports might keep you in the running.

Many entry-level positions are on field crews that require folks to spend nearly every waking moment together in remote settings. This amplifies the importance of basic social interaction skills. No one wants to hire a jerk, so be aware that folks will be considering the attitude and communication skills that you present in your application and interview. Prepare for an interview question about diffusing conflict. I’ll say it again later, but it’s important enough that it bears repeating – be confident in yourself as a candidate, but not cocky. If you’re applying for an entry-level position, you’re probably not an expert in any aspect of the job. Even if you are, stating your “proficiency” and providing details about your experience is a more humble way of sharing the value of your technical skills. Acting like you know it all will almost guarantee you

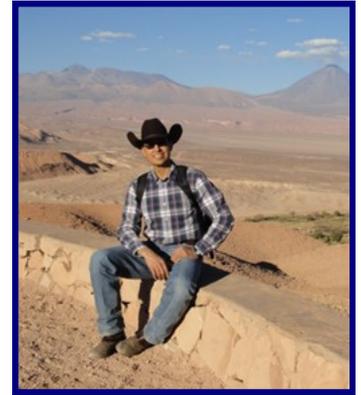
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Regional News:

Highlights from SW Section Representative to TWS Council

By: Fidel Hernandez

Despite it being September, summer is still lingering in southern Texas. However, with each passing day, there are glimpses of an approaching change of season. Mornings are becoming a bit cooler, and days are becoming a bit shorter. The sun also seems to be losing a bit of its intensity. Autumn cannot be too far away...



Like most organizations, activity at TWS slows down a bit during summer. However, there are always things happening somewhere within TWS. Below is a short update on TWS operations and synopsis of some of the primary activities.

GENERAL OPERATIONS

Finance. The Wildlife Society operates on a July-June fiscal year, and the beginning month (July) of the new fiscal year indicated a strong start both in terms of operations and investments. Overall financial activities for July showed positive income that was primarily driven by conference receipts, strong investment gains, publications receipts, and relatively low expenses. Thus, TWS has started the year ahead of expectations in revenues, expenses, and investments that should provide some security against fluctuations as the fiscal year unfolds.

Membership. In our last newsletter, I reported that TWS membership was 8,989 members in April 2016. The current membership is 9,317 members as of August 2016. Thus, TWS membership continues to grow. One new feature of member services that TWS has been working on is the development of a TWS Network Online Directory. TWS has been engaged in having members update their profiles in order to provide the most effective possible directory.

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Presidents Message cont...

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won't get the position.

Team compatibility can be difficult to tease out of an applicant's resume, cover letter, and interview. This is one of many reasons that volunteering and other professional interaction opportunities are so valuable. Positive interactions with professionals can go a long way toward removing the doubt around whether you'd be a good fit for their team.

Internships and seasonal technicians are typically opportunities to build experience. Previous professional and volunteer experience can certainly give candidates an advantage, so if you've got relevant experience, you'll want to showcase that: data management, navigation, geospatial processing, vehicle operation, etc. However, experience is not a prerequisite for entry level positions. It's more important to show that you have the capability to learn the skills you will need to perform the job. In my opinion, this is why a reviewer's impression of the cover letter and resume are of paramount importance. The content of these documents is always important, but if the presentation is full of grammatical errors, misspelled words, and formatting inconsistencies, the reviewer will end up questioning the aptitude of the applicant which calls into question the potential to learn and perform new skills. Like all important documents, have multiple folks review before submission.

One side-note: The idea that a resume should never exceed a page is not the standard anymore (at least in the wildlife field as I have experienced it). If you have enough pertinent information that you require more than one page, use that space. That doesn't mean list out every class you've taken just to fill space. Be judicious. The resumes of wildlifers with years of experience are typically between 2 and 4 pages. Folks applying for entry-level positions certainly shouldn't exceed that.

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Regional News cont...

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To date, 2,632 members have updated their profiles, and TWS believes that a launch will be possible once this number has increased to 5,000 members. So, if you have not done so already, please remember to update your member profile if necessary. Another improvement of member services is that TWS has begun work on a new layout for the member portal that will feature a design and navigation that is similar to the TWS website in order to provide a more consistent member experience. The anticipated launch date for the redesigned member portal is November 1.

Membership Audit of Organizational-Unit Officers. As you may know, one requirement to hold office at the state, section, and national level is membership with the parent society. TWS recently conducted an audit of membership among organizational-unit officers. This audit found that 257 organization-unit officers (about 15% of the total) currently are not members of the parent society. Additionally, the holders of 159 current positions have not been reported to headquarters resulting in TWS being unaware as to the membership status of these individuals. TWS has reached out to organization-unit officers in an attempt to update membership status of current organization-unit officers. If you currently hold office and have forgotten to renew your membership to the parent society, please do so to assist TWS in updating their membership.

TWS COUNCIL

Elections. In case you missed the results of the recent TWS election, here are the newly elected officers and representatives. New Council members include Darren Miller as TWS Vice-president, and John Moriarty as the North Central Section Representative. Cynthia Perrine and Harriet Allen were elected to continue their representation of the Western Section and Northwestern Section, respectively.

TWS Conservation Engagement. TWS CEO Ken Williams travels extensively throughout the year building relationships and collaborations with other conservation organizations to promote partnerships and advance the TWS mission. Below is a brief overview

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Presidents Message cont...

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With the interview in mind, prepare an example of a specific skill set that you had to learn to accomplish a given task (preferable in the recent past). It doesn't have to be wildlife related if it showcases your ability to pick up new skills and perform them successfully. However, it's a nice bonus if the skills you discuss are applicable to the job for which you are applying. If your academic record is worthy of attention, consider highlighting an example from an extended class project. If you have a particularly impressive example, consider working it into your cover letter.

The final element that hiring supervisors look for is an overall dedication and enthusiasm for wildlife work. Hopefully, everyone considering a wildlife career knows that the only vacation home their salary is likely to support will either fit in your backpack or hook up to your truck. Like most career paths, the most successful folks are the ones who work hard. Because the paycheck isn't what you might call inspiring, it's dedication to the resource that drives wildlifers to succeed and to over-achieve. A resume that stands out is loaded with volunteer experience; outdoor recreation hobbies like backpacking, hunting, birding, fishing, boating, hiking, camping, etc.; membership in student or professional wildlife organizations (blatant plug for AZTWS membership: only \$6/year and you can put it on your resume); and participation in conferences and other events. Not only do these extra-curricular activities shine on a resume, but they can provide valuable opportunities to work alongside biologists who might one day be in a position to support your candidacy for a position. A first-hand account of your stellar work ethic can go a long way in being considered for future positions. Keep in mind that people talk, and every experience counts – whether paid or volunteer. If you go out of your way to do the best you can, even if it's on a one-day volunteer trip that has little to do with a job you may later pursue, you may earn an unsolicited positive recommendation. Conversely, if you do the bare minimum or have a poor attitude, know that word

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Regional News cont...

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of some of the discussions occurring during summer.

- **Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA).** Dr. Williams was invited to join and co-chair an AFWA President's Task Force to work on a series of adaptive challenges to the long-term success of fish and wildlife conservation in North America. Some of the issues that will be addressed include recruitment and retention of hunters, linking resource science and management, and evaluation and strengthening the relationships of state and federal agencies.
- **North American Ornithological Congress (NAOC).** Dr. Williams attended the NAOC in Washington DC. While there, he conferred with Umberto Berlanga, the Conservation Director for CONABIO in Mexico. Director Berlanga expressed interest in working with TWS to establish a TWS presence in Mexico and discussions will ensue on the next steps to make such presence a reality.
- **National Wildlife Federation (NWF).** Dr. Williams met with the Senior Scientist, Doug Inkley, and other staff at NWF to ensure a smooth transition and continuation of TWS interactions when Senior Scientist Inkley retires this autumn. Issues discussed included collaboration at the chapter and national level, the possibility of joint positioning on some conservation issues, and the prospect of partnering with them to sponsor TWS annual meetings.
- **Society of Range Management (SRM).** Dr. Williams and TWS Director Keith Norris met with the executive leadership of SRM in Washington DC. SRM is interested in pursuing a cooperative relationship with TWS, building on previous discussions at an executives meeting with TWS, SRM, American Fisheries Society, Society for Conservation Biology, and others. TWS proposed an agreement focusing on some common issues facing

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Presidents Message cont...

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about that experience will spread.

One of the most important things to remember is that the real interview starts when a person gets the job. The ones who shine, who are quick to volunteer for whatever tasks need to be done, who work the hardest and the smartest are the ones supervisors keep around after the project ends. These supervisors also talk to other folks looking for help and can be instrumental in finding the next position for you.

Interested in more tips and tricks? Check out our webpage at <https://aztws.com/tips-and-tricks-for-getting-a-wildlife-job/>.

Opportunities abound to build your resume, and our website is a great way to learn about these. We recently established a new chapter chair position to coordinate 3 pages on our website: our Event Calendar (which we intend to make a comprehensive resource for wildlife volunteer opportunities across Arizona), our Job Postings Board, and Ongoing Opportunities where long-term volunteer positions and other engagement possibilities will be compiled. We're considering an opt-in email distribution list for active members interested in getting emails from various Arizona project leads. Our calendar is starting to fill up, so be sure to check out aztws.com/events and watch for emails and postings about exciting opportunities.

I also encourage you to continue learning and exploring the science of our world. As part of that, please enjoy the articles in this issue of the newsletter. If you're interested in reading past issues or in learning more about the Arizona Chapter, check out our ever-improving website at <http://aztws.com>. And please consider submitting an article to the newsletter. If you have suggestions regarding improving any aspect of the Arizona Chapter of The Wildlife Society, I welcome your comments. Please email me at ssprague@azgfd.gov.

Scott Sprague
AZTWS Chapter President

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Regional News cont...

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the 2 societies and follow up discussions will occur after the TWS Raleigh conference this October 2016.

Position Announcement. As you may have heard by now, CEO Ken Williams will be retiring in July 2017. The Executive Committee has been involved in succession planning in anticipation of Dr. Williams' retirement next year. A position announcement has been created and distributed through several mediums. The last date to apply is 28 October 2016. If you know anyone who is interested or would be an ideal candidate, please pass along this career opportunity to him-her. A full position description can be found at: <http://wfscjobs.tamu.edu/jobs/executive-directorchief-executive-officer-maryland/>

PUBLICATIONS

In the past, membership to TWS did not include access to TWS journals. Journal access involved a fee in addition to membership costs. However, in July 2016, TWS announced a policy change whereby membership to TWS included free web access to all TWS journals beginning in January 2017. Members have been notified through email and the e-Wildlifer. This policy change also has been announced to the public at large via the TWS website.

Until next time,

Fidel Hernández

Fidel Hernández
Southwest Section Representative of
TWS



Photos submitted by Jan Schipper

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 <https://aztws.com/resources/continuinged/>, or may be obtained from the Chairman of the Continuing Education Committee, Stan Cunningham (Stanley.Cunningham@asu.edu).



We need articles, stories and pictures for upcoming newsletters.

The Arizona Wildlifer Deadlines

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Winter 2016	Dec 13, 2016
Spring 2017	Mar 14, 2017

Email submissions to: aztwseditor@gmail.com

Our Neck of The Woods...

San Pedro Wildlife

By Heather Bateman, Associate Professor, Arizona State University, Polytechnic

For as long as I've studied the biota of floodplains – I have always wanted to study the San Pedro. There are many definitions for riparian zones, but my favorite is the interface between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. This means riparian areas are influenced by terrestrial factors like rainfall and forests of woody trees, but also shaped by hydrologic flows and pulses. These riparia are dynamic systems, shaped by the disturbance of flooding and home to organisms that time their life cycles around spring floods or monsoon rains. Another allure of riparian zones is their scarcity. In aridland regions, riparian ecosystems can make up less than 1% of the total land area. Riparian areas are a ribbon of green in the desert and have a disproportionate influence on biodiversity throughout their watersheds.

The San Pedro River originates in Sonora, Mexico and flows north into Arizona. The upper basin is flanked by the Huachuca and Mule Mountains. The lower basin begins near Benson and flows to confluence with the Gila River in Winkelman. The upper basin is mostly composed of semidesert grasslands and Chihuahuan desert scrub. The lower basin drains Sonoran desert scrub.

This summer we established study sites along the lower San Pedro downstream of Aravaipa Creek and along a section of the Gila River near Kearney. We are monitoring amphibian, reptile, and ground arthropod communities across three forest types – cottonwood/willow (*Populus/Salix*) forest, mesquite (*Prosopis*) bosque, and non-native saltcedar (*Tamarix*) stands. This is one of the few floodplain systems where I have been able to study large areas of these forest types across a relatively small geographic range. I am one of many researchers who has compared non-native saltcedar to native forests to evaluate variation in habitat and wildlife communities. Our research team provides recommendations to resource managers who often balance invasive species control and support native diversity. The goal of our work is to compare wildlife communities across riparian forest types and evaluate species-habitat relations. We also want to investigate how wildlife communities could change



First lizard of the project – *Urosaurus ornatus* (ornate tree lizard). Cheyenne Herzog (left) handing lizard to Lauren Jackson (right), both undergraduates in ASU Applied Biological Sciences program on the Polytechnic campus. Sidney Riddle (center) is a graduate of Auburn University and crew leader.

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San Pedro Wildlife cont...

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with shifts in vegetation.

Cottonwood and willow trees are obligate phreatophytes, which means they need their 'feet in the water'. These deeply rooted trees occur only where groundwater is shallow and, with increasing distance from the stream, they give way to trees like saltcedar and mesquite which can tolerate deeper groundwater levels. Whether from climate change or increased demand from growing human populations, scientists expect less water will be available to maintain flows in perennial and intermittent streams. Therefore, this stratified design across three forest types, will allow our research team to evaluate which wildlife species might be winners and losers in a drying environment.

Our summer has been filled with many firsts. Our crew leader, Sidney Riddle, is a graduate of Auburn University and most herpetofauna in Arizona are 'lifers' for Sid. Two ASU undergraduates studying Applied Biological Sciences, Cheyenne Herzog and Lauren Jackson, are technicians on the project. I have enjoyed seeing field work and handling animals through the eyes of enthusiastic young scholars. Both Cheyenne and Lauren have developed independent research projects to explore topics they developed.



Species encountered along the San Pedro and Gila Rivers. Clockwise: *Terrapene ornata* (ornate box turtle), *Tantilla hobartsmithi* (Smith's black-headed snake), *Sceloporus clarkii* (Clark's spiny lizard), and *Scaphiopus couchii* (Couch's spadefoot toads). Funding support is provided by the Bureau of Reclamation.

I asked Cheyenne and Lauren to explain their projects. Cheyenne says her objective is to use camera trapping to sample the meso-mammal community and compare abundance of mammals across three riparian forest types along the San Pedro River and the Gila River to determine which habitat has the highest abundance. A total of 12 cameras have been set, four in each habitat type, placed along trails and near herpetology trapping sites where signs of mammals have been present. For camera placement, she selected a random distance between trap arrays and at least 40 m away from roads. Cameras have been placed angled down the trail at a height of 60 cm to 1 m. Cheyenne's favorite part of her project is getting to see wildlife and their behaviors that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to observe.

Lauren's project is investigating the presence of mites (an ectoparasite) on two species of whiptail lizards, *Aspidoscelis tigris* and *Aspidoscelis sonora*. Lauren will compare the three forest habitat types to see which habitats have lizards with higher mite loads. She also will ex-

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San Pedro Wildlife cont...

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explore the relationship of mite loads between the parthenogenic species (*A. sonora*) vs. the sexual species (*A. tigris*). Lauren samples lizards from the trap arrays and takes pictures of the ventral side of the whiptails. After organizing and uploading the photos, each individual scale of the whiptail is counted. Then a second count is performed of the scales to double-check mite count. She calculates the quotient to determine a percentage of mite load per whiptail. Lauren says her favorite part of the project is finding all of the surprise hiding spots that mites use on the whiptails. Sometimes the mites are present in places that she would never guess.

We look forward to spending the Fall semester summarizing results. Look for posters this year at JAM from the Bateman lab on San Pedro

wildlife. If you want to learn more about the San Pedro and explore its wonders, there are many resources available from conservation organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and Arizona Audubon. A wonderful resource was written by Stromberg and Tellman on the Ecology and Conservation of the San Pedro River. If you want to learn more about BS and MS degrees in Applied Biology and our new Certificate in Wildlife Management, you can contact Dr. Bateman (Heather.L.Bateman@asu.edu).



Lauren Jackson photographs a tiger whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris*) to quantify mite load.



Mammals detected on camera traps along the San Pedro and Gila Rivers. Right to left: bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) adult and cub, mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), and javelina (*Tayassu tajacu*) near trap arrays. Photos from Cheyenne Herzog.

Student Voice

Tucson Audubon Society Summer Internship

By Ol'ha Phillips, University of Arizona Student Chapter Secretary

I am a University of Arizona student majoring in Wildlife Conservation and Management. After I took an ornithology class, I fell in love with birds. Before, I had not noticed how many beautiful avian species we have in Arizona. It did not take long for me to become an avid birder. By following up on a flyer posted on campus inquiring for interns, I received a position as Bird Survey Assistant with Tucson Audubon Society. My job consisted of both office and field work.

The field work I was involved in during the summer was a series of surveys for a threatened Yellow-billed Cuckoo (YBCU) Project. The goal of this project was to locate existing YBCU territories in the eight Sky Island mountain ranges of Southeastern Arizona to determine if these birds use higher elevations than previously described in literature. The mentioned sky islands are Chiricahua, Huachuca, Santa Catalina, Santa Rita, Whetstone, and Patagonia Mountains; Canelo Hills; and Atascosa Highlands.



Ol'ha conducting a yellow-billed cuckoo survey.



Barn swallows at Parker Canyon Lake viewed through binoculars.

One of the surveys that stood out to me the most was one of my very first: Collins Canyon, Canelo Hills. Despite it being mid-August, the riparian area felt comfortably cool. The place was surrounded by dense vegetation and running water: a perfect habitat for great bird diversity.

Each survey consisted of 2-3 volunteers and staff hiking in a riparian area along a wash. At each survey point we played a cuckoo call and observed responses. If we had a positive YBCU identification we had to walk at least 300 meters to avoid a double detection. We also had to record the type of detection (visual or aural/incidental or playback), number of individuals, direction and estimated distance to the bird, type of call, and any additional comments. If we did not observe a cuckoo in that area we only had to walk at least 100 meters away from previous point. During the last survey visit we collected vegetation data, insect prey presence, canopy, mid-story and understory characteristics, as well as topography and water proximity to identify which areas were preferred.

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Student Voice, cont...

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This internship has taught me inter-agency communication, software manipulation, bird identification and survey protocol. I was introduced to many experienced professionals who have been very helpful in sculpting my own specialized skills.

I was offered an opportunity to extend my internship with Tucson Audubon Society and I look forward to the prospect of continued learning from this organization.



Storm Clouds over the Whetstone Mountains



Arivaca Lake

Critical Habitat Finalized for Two Arizona Cacti

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has finalized critical habitat for the Fickeisen plains cactus and the acuña cactus, both of which are only found in portions of Arizona. A total of 17,456 acres in six units are designated as critical habitat for Fickeisen plains cactus in portions of Coconino and Mohave counties, and 18,535 acres in six units are being designated for the acuña cactus in portions of Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal counties. Areas designated as critical habitat are primarily federally owned lands administered by the Forest Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management.

Critical habitat designations have no effect on actions taking place on non-federal lands unless proposed activities involve federal funding or permitting.

The final rule was published in the Federal Register on August 18, 2016. Copies of the final rule, maps and other details about the plants are available online at: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/> or by contacting the Service’s Arizona Ecological Services Office at (602) 242-0210.

Standing Invitation!

Call for Award Nominees

Submit your valued co-workers and partners for one of our Chapter Awards (see criteria at <http://aztws.com>, then click on “Awards”). Let’s recognize our finest! Submit your nominations to our President Elect, Kay Nicholson (knicholson@logansimpson.com).

Call for Chapter Officer and Board Member Nominees

Also: Please consider becoming active with the Chapter as an officer or board member. Again, contact Kay Nicholson (knicholson@logansimpson.com) to register your interest. We’d love to have you on our board!

New TWS Membership Benefit!

Did you hear the good news?

TWS President Gary Potts announced that effective January 1, 2017 online access to all of the Society's journals--a \$75 value--will be provided to TWS members at no charge.

[Click here](#) to read all about it!



ARIZONA / NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

of the American Fisheries Society



presents
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Arizona-New Mexico Chapters of the
**American Fisheries Society and
The Wildlife Society**
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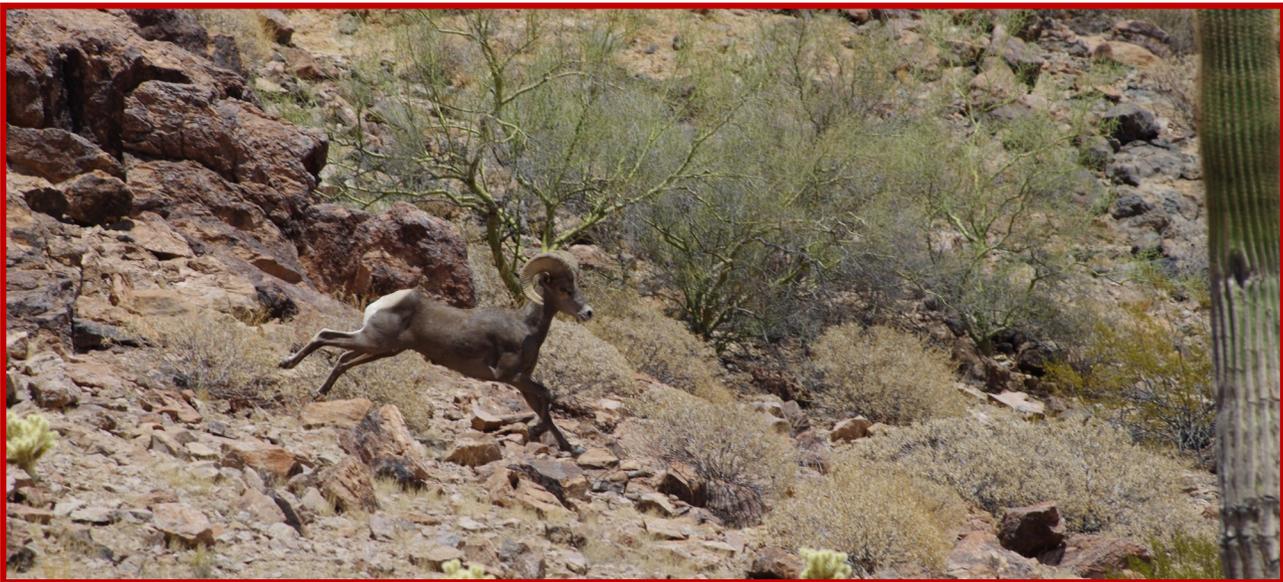


Photo submitted by Joseph Drake, Dept of Environmental Conservation, UMass - Amherst