

THE ARIZONA WILDLIFER

2021 Issue 2

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Spring Edition

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The President's Message



AZTWS President Ho Yi Wan.

March marked the anniversary of the lockdowns in the United States caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtually all of us have to learn to cope with inconvenience and stress linked to the pandemic. As I penned this first letter as President of the Arizona Chapter of The Wildlife Society (AZTWS), I could not help but to ponder upon the revelation given by this pandemic which manifests the intimate relationships between humans and wildlife. As devastating as the zoonotic coronavirus has been, we are just seeing a glimpse of the profound impact that humans and animals have on each other. Humans as a whole are more capable of learning and adapting to the consequences resulting from zoonotic impacts, though the price can be hefty. Conversely, many other species might not be able to adapt quickly enough to anthropogenic impacts, which historically have led to extirpation and extinction. Therefore, whenever I feel bleak and miserable due to the pandemic, it serves as a reminder of the harm that humans have caused to wildlife and their habitats. It also motivates me to be a better steward of ecosystems and the natural resources they provide.

Another thing that troubled me while I was writing this letter was the tragic murder of multiple Asians in Atlanta. Hate is a virus, one that is more dangerously powerful than the COVID-19 virus. First of all, my heart goes out to the victims and their families in this tragedy. Secondly, being a scientist and educator coming from the Asian community, I have been confronting stereotypes and racial biases throughout my career. Without a doubt, I believe that there are many wildlife professionals and students who are also in the same shoes, trying to pursue their dreams while facing different degrees of discrimination or bias. When I ran for the President-

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Presidents Message cont...

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elect of AZTWS in 2020, one of the priorities that I promised was to promote AZTWS's diversity by supporting underrepresented groups. I want to take this opportunity to expressly invite you to get involved in supporting diversity and inclusiveness of AZTWS. We need you. With your support, we can remove intangible barriers and obstacles that may be prohibiting underrepresented groups from joining our big family. Here are some ways of how you can get involved:

- ◇ **Invite anyone you know to [join AZTWS](#).** Often times, it is difficult to know whether someone is being marginalized due to their background. Having a personal invitation can make them feel more comfortable and safer to join a professional organization. Also, groups that are underrepresented in our field, including but not limited to women, persons with disabilities, black, indigenous, and other racial and ethnic minority groups, may especially feel welcome because of your invitation.
- ◇ **Financially sponsor someone to become a member.** Although the \$6 membership fee may seem inexpensive, it can be an obstacle for people with economic hardships to join the chapter. Perhaps you may ask, "would you like to join AZTWS if I pay for your membership fee?" [*editors note: You can pay-it-forward by gifting a membership [here](#); you only need the recipient's name and email address*]
- ◇ **Converse and exchange thoughts with people from different backgrounds with an open mind.** Diversity and inclusion are not just statistical numbers. To truly support diversity and inclusion, we must learn to appreciate each other. We can all be ambassadors to build bridges between different groups.
- ◇ **Follow and share AZTWS's social media contents.** If you are on social media,

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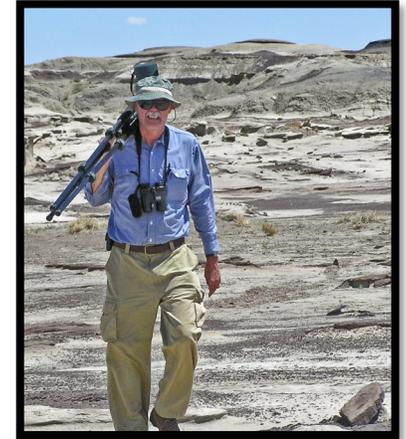
Regional News:

Southwest Section Tracks

By Jim Ramakka

[TWS Southwest Section](#) Representative

Not surprisingly, the first quarter of 2021 has been filled with Zoom calls and webinars. The Chapters of the Southwest Section of The Wildlife Society held very impressive virtual meetings that highlighted the great work that students and our professional members are continuing to do while facing the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. The work of TWS Council has continued as well. In addition to various committee meetings, the full Council has met twice via Zoom since the beginning of the year.



During a Special Council Meeting on January 25th, we reviewed a report of the Policy Priorities Committee that included an analysis of input from Chapters and Sections. Based on that input, we approved the following Policy Priorities for 2021–22:

- Continue efforts toward passage of Recovering America's Wildlife Act
- Support funding for U.S. federal cooperative science programs (e.g., Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units, Climate Adaptation Science Centers, and other similar programs)
- Support adequate funding for U.S. federal land management agencies (e.g., USFWS Refuges, BLM, FS)
- Support efforts to restore previous interpretation of "take" under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Encourage and support Chapter, Section, and Working Groups to continue engagement in policy issues through the Conservation Affairs Network

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Presidents Message cont...

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please follow our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts. And don't forget to invite all your friends to follow us as well!

I have only listed a few things here, but there are of course other ways that you can show support. Be proactive and creative, and do not underestimate your power to make a change. As the entire world is gradually overcoming the coronavirus in 2021, it is my sincere hope that AZTWS members will stay healthy and strong. More importantly, I also hope AZTWS members can become a united force to conquer the virus of hate with love. Together, we can build a diverse organization that unites in love and in passion for wildlife.

~Ho Yi Wan, AZTWS President

* * * * *



Great Horned Owl. Credit Brianne Kenny.

Regional News:

Council again met for its Spring Meeting on March 6th and 7th. Section and Chapter Presidents and President-Elects, Student Chapter Presidents, Working Group Chairs and Chair-Elects sat in and observed the meeting. There were several key topics on the agenda including staffing priorities, budget, and Operation Plan progress. Initial discussion included staffing priorities for the future (1–3 years out) based on recent and potential enhancement of member programs, support services, and current staff's knowledge and talents. Additional use of contractors is one possible alternative. All alternatives depend on future budget status. The status of FY 21 Budget revealed income from sponsors is down, but so are expenses. This results in a basically stable budget situation at the present time. During discussions of Operations Plan progress, it was determined that staff is on track to meet all Operations Plan goals, and has provided additional support for a number of tasks that were not delineated in the original plan including the following:

- International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- TWS Bylaws
- Office of Ombuds
- Paycheck Protection Program
- Efforts to inform and influence the incoming U.S. Presidential administration
- Virtual Student Conclaves
- Establishment of a Mexico Chapter
- Professional development webinar series
- Preparation of agendas, archives, and meeting minutes for more frequent Council meetings

Overall, there are many Operation Plan highlights to share including:

- The Virtual Annual Conferences attracted 2,534 attendees and generated a net profit of \$202,00
- Membership has grown to a record level of 11,698
- A Diversity/Equity/Inclusion (DEI) Plan was drafted for Council review
- Staff continues working to support initiation of a Mexican Chapter (pending incorporation under Mexican Law)

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- Banking and Accounting Services continues support for Working Groups to be initiated
- All Federal Partners have renewed their participation in TWS Partners Program
- TWS received a Payroll Protection Plan Loan which has since been forgiven (a second PPP loan was received in March)
- Planning for the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference is proceeding well

Additionally, Council discussed future conference structure—an *ad hoc* committee was established to evaluate how to enhance conference efforts by creating a combination in-person/virtual event. Council also covered the FY 22 Operations Plan and TWS Committee Charges. The Financial and Investment Policy was reviewed and a conservative approach to budgeting will continue; TWS will remain cautious about new expenditures while monitoring the changing economic situation. Another important topic was proposed revisions to the Bylaws and General Operation Procedures. The Bylaws Subcommittee has been working on revisions for the past two years. Input from TWS Past Presidents, Aldo Leopold Award Winners, TWS Sections and Chapters, and TWS Working Groups highlighted two problem areas that needed to be addressed:

1. The definition of Sections (membership area vs voting district)—i.e., individuals can join a membership Section without joining TWS, but only TWS members may vote for Section Representative to Council. Clarification is needed as to when or how Council may alter the boundaries to ensure equitable representation of the membership on Council.
2. Clarification of the legal identity of Working Groups to TWS to comply with tax laws and TWS articles of incorporation.

Council voted to approve the publication of the proposed Bylaw revisions for distribution to the general membership for review and a vote. Council agreed to a request from the TWP Editorial Advisory Board to provide a small honorarium to the lead authors of contributed articles and to the establishment of an award for best contributed article. Also, the International Involvement Liaison Committee is exploring opportunities for further TWS engagement at the international level. This examines the following questions: How should TWS make best use of its newly granted membership to IUCN? How much funding should be allocated for participation at IUCN meetings and the IUGB meeting proposed for Budapest in September? Another important item was prioritization of climate change efforts as a topic for continued analysis and planning to determine how to integrate meaningful and implementable actions into TWS planning and programs. Finally, Council voted to approve the recipients nominated to receive this year's Group Achievement Award and TWS Fellows Awards. An announcement of the recipients will be made at a future date.

This information is only a brief summary of the Spring Council meeting. Full minutes of the meeting will be posted on the TWS website. The bottom line is that TWS has been able to weather the pandemic in good shape overall. Reduced revenue has been compensated in large part by reduced expenses and use of the Payroll Protection Plan program. TWS staff have done a great job of working to support the subunits and membership has increased. Council will continue to take a cautious approach to TWS finances and activities as we continue to work through these turbulent times.

Stay safe and please contact me with any questions you might have.

Jim Ramakka, CWB®
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Fresh Review of U.S. Jaguar Habitat Modelling Identifies 20 Million Acres in Arizona and New Mexico

By *Bryan Bird,*

Executive Board Member, NMTWS; Southwest Program Direction, Defenders of Wildlife

A team of scientists have identified a wide swath of habitat in Arizona and New Mexico that they say could eventually support more than 150 jaguars. Their study, published in the journal *Oryx* ([Sanderson et al. 2021](#)), states that the central mountains of the two states, which they call the “Central Arizona/New Mexico Recovery Area” or CANRA, offers new opportunities for the United States to contribute to recovery of the species.

The multidisciplinary international group of scientists compared 12 habitat models for jaguars in Arizona and New Mexico and found potentially suitable habitat—equivalent to the size of South Carolina—far from the southern border with Mexico. This area was not considered in the 2019 USFWS recovery plan for the jaguar, but the Service left open the possibility of revising the recovery plan boundaries as new information, such as this study, becomes available.

Jaguars are now considered an Endangered Species across their range (including the U.S.) and state-level protections exist in Arizona and New Mexico. Over the last two decades, several male jaguars have been photographed in the mountains south of Interstate-10. Jaguars are often associated with tropical habitats such as those in the Amazon and Central America, but historically they were found as far north as the Grand Canyon. The last jaguar north of I-10 was killed by a U.S. government hunter in 1964. Historical jaguar observations in the U.S. and northern Mexico can be queried online at <https://jaguardata.info>.

Jaguar South of the Border Coverage Picked up by National Geographic



Juvenile male Jaguar “El Bonito” captured on wildlife camera.
Credit Ganesh Marin.

Related to the potential suitable habitat study above, members of a multinational cooperation recently detected a juvenile male jaguar just south of the U.S. border. University of Arizona doctoral student Ganesh Marin—who is researching borderlands wildlife biodiversity and corridors via remote cameras and other ecological techniques—[captured footage of the animal](#), named El Bonito (“the beautiful”), along the Cajon Bonito stream in an area managed by the conservation organization Cuenca Los Ojos [recall this area’s incredible biodiversity in our [2021 Winter issue](#) written by former Arizona State University graduate student and current AZTWS

Social Media Chair, Kinley Ragan]. The recent sighting and the suitable habitat study offer more resources for conservation managers across borders to work towards maintaining wildlife corridors and preserving biodiversity. This story was originally reported by Douglas Main for National Geographic (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/jaguar-near-arizona-border-wall-mexico>).

Our Neck of The Woods...

My Journey from Tropical Forests to the Southwest Deserts

By José G. Martínez-Fonseca,
Ph.D. student, Northern Arizona University

Imagine a flying jaguar with a wingspan of over 3 feet, an apex predator that hunts prey in the complete darkness of the tropical rainforest. What I'm describing is basically a spectral bat (*Vampyrum spectrum*), that—with the use of echolocation—can navigate the dense forests of Nicaragua. This and other animalivorous (i.e., feeding on birds and small mammals) bat species require mature forests to thrive, but we don't know much else about them. In 2017, I had the unique opportunity to conduct telemetry on an adult female to find her diurnal roost. At 40 feet aboveground, this bat shared a tree cavity with her pup and an adult male mate (see "Nicaragua Vampyrum" on YouTube [here](#)).

I grew up in Central America near the Pacific coast in a town of about 6,000 people. Nicaragua, my home country, is about 45% the size of Arizona. Thanks to very supportive parents, I got my hands on a few field guides early in life (these were difficult to find in Nicaragua). Some people in my family were not very happy when I started catching and bringing home snakes just few days after I got my first reptile field guide, but there was no going back. Fast-forward a couple of decades and I'm now in a PhD program in the School of Forestry at Northern Arizona University. The deserts of the Southwest are quite different ecosystems from the tropical forests where I grew up, but it's been a lot of fun identifying snake species new to me!

I have been fortunate to work with several local species during my time in Arizona, from the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius luteus*) in the White Mountains to species of spiny lizards (*Sceloporus* spp.) in the Chiricahua Mountains. However, my main study system comprises the endangered Tropical Dry Forest in Nicaragua. During the last 10 years, we identified 56 bat species. This represents almost half the species reported for Nicaragua and more than all the species found in the United States. Bats are incredible animals that provide important ecosystem services like pollination and seed dispersion. They promote forest regeneration and predators such as the spectral bat are important in controlling populations of insects and small vertebrates.



José holds a male Spectral Bat in the coastal tropical dry forest of Nicaragua. Credit José G. Martínez-Fonseca.

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Despite intense anthropogenic disturbance in the last 200 years, the Pacific side of Nicaragua (above/below) is still a hotspot for bat diversity with 56 species recorded to date. Credit José G. Martínez-Fonseca.



Sadly, despite the incredible species richness in Nicaragua, the landscape is now a mosaic of forest patches with seasonal crops, teak plantations (*Tectona grandis*), and pastures that fragment what was once continuous forest. With Drs. Carol Chambers and Ho Yi Wan and Nicaraguan collaborators, we are working to better understand the impacts of habitat fragmentation on bats at varying spatial scales.

We know that habitat fragmentation affects bat species in different ways. Some species like the short-tailed bats (*Carollia* spp.) benefit from fragmentation through secondary growth. However, populations of other species, such as the spectral bat, might be declining due to

landscape changes. We don't know much about the underlying mechanisms that drive such responses. We have several questions: How can we maximize the retention of species diversity in these landscapes? At what spatial scale are species sensitive to changes in their environment? What landscape configurations are most appropriate for conservation and retaining the ecosystem function of bats? Are there morphological traits that we could use to predict species response to habitat fragmentation? What requirements are limiting factors for bat species (e.g., roost or food availability)?

I know we will find answers for some of these questions in the next few years as I analyze data and finish my dissertation, but I'm equally excited for the new questions that will arise as we dive deeper into the lives of these species. We have some insights on how predator species like the Mexican Spotted Owl in Arizona and New Mexico respond to human disturbances in the landscape (AZTWS President Ho Yi Wan did his dissertation on this topic!), but there is a lot more to learn.

Liberty Wildlife: A Pandemic Paradise

*By Trinity Moll,
Volunteer, Liberty Wildlife*

Being a volunteer at Liberty Wildlife (Phoenix) has brought the most happiness I've ever felt in my entire life. I've been a volunteer since July 2020 and have loved every second of it.

Liberty Wildlife was founded in 1981 and serves as a wildlife rehabilitation, education, and conservation facility for raptors, reptiles, small mammals, and other types of birds.

To become a volunteer, you need to first fill out an application on the Liberty [website](#). Next, you pick which day and time slot you would be able to volunteer. Working with small mammals requires a rabies immunization. Liberty depends on their volunteers to show up and complete their job duties during their shift, all while wearing a face mask. Shifts can last for several hours.

The following are several volunteer departments at Liberty: Daily Care, Hotline, Intake Window, ICU, Medical Service, Orphan Care, Rescue and Transport, and Education.

Daily Care volunteers are responsible for preparing diets, cleaning enclosures, and making sure each bird has clean water. Birds that are in rehab are still recovering from their injuries.

Hotline volunteers assist by answering calls about injured or orphaned wildlife. You can do this from the comfort of your own home if you have a computer and phone. There are Intake Window volunteers working the Intake Window. This is where the public bring in ill, injured, or orphaned wildlife.

When it comes to being a Medical Services volunteer, previous hands-on experience with wildlife is required. You also need to have volunteered with Liberty for at least six months. Your responsibilities will include completing medical procedures, updating care and treatment notes, and completing other necessary paperwork. Orphan Care is another volunteer department that is responsible for feeding the



Credit Reagle Photography.

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songbirds that are brought in orphaned. This busy role is seasonal, running from April to September, and you will be feeding birds every 15 minutes.

Rescue and Transport volunteers use their personal vehicles in the field to bring injured animals into Liberty. Intensive care unit (ICU) volunteers are responsible for cleaning enclosures, preparing diets, and at times, force-feeding birds. When it comes to force-feeding, the volunteers need to check the daily feeding chart to make sure each bird is self-feeding. If a bird is not eating, we need to make sure it does. If a bird doesn't eat for a few days, it can die. Thus, force-feeding can sometimes make the difference between life and death.

The last department is Education. Education volunteers are responsible for feeding the birds and cleaning their enclosures. The enclosures in the Education department are what the public views; they also need to be well maintained. You are also responsible for the "Interactive Room"—where the reptiles reside. You would need to check their water levels, prepare diets, and place food in their enclosure. They have a daily feeding chart, so volunteers must carefully list food refusals and additions.



Each day is different, and there may be additional tasks that need to be handled. Every volunteer position has training, some longer than others. When it comes to winter months, we slow down and there aren't as many birds as usual. However, there are more birds during the summer months and the shifts can last longer. You will sometimes be working outside, so you must be able to handle the heat. If you need to take a break or drink water to cool down that is perfectly fine.

I'm honored to be able to volunteer and make a difference during the pandemic. These times are tough for everyone, but to be able to be a part of a foundation as amazing as Liberty Wildlife makes my life worthwhile.

Credit Reagle Photography.



Roadrunners with a meal (left) and ducks on the water (right). Credit Brianne Kenny.

Bobcats in Tucson Project—Update & Donations Needed

By Kay Nicholson,

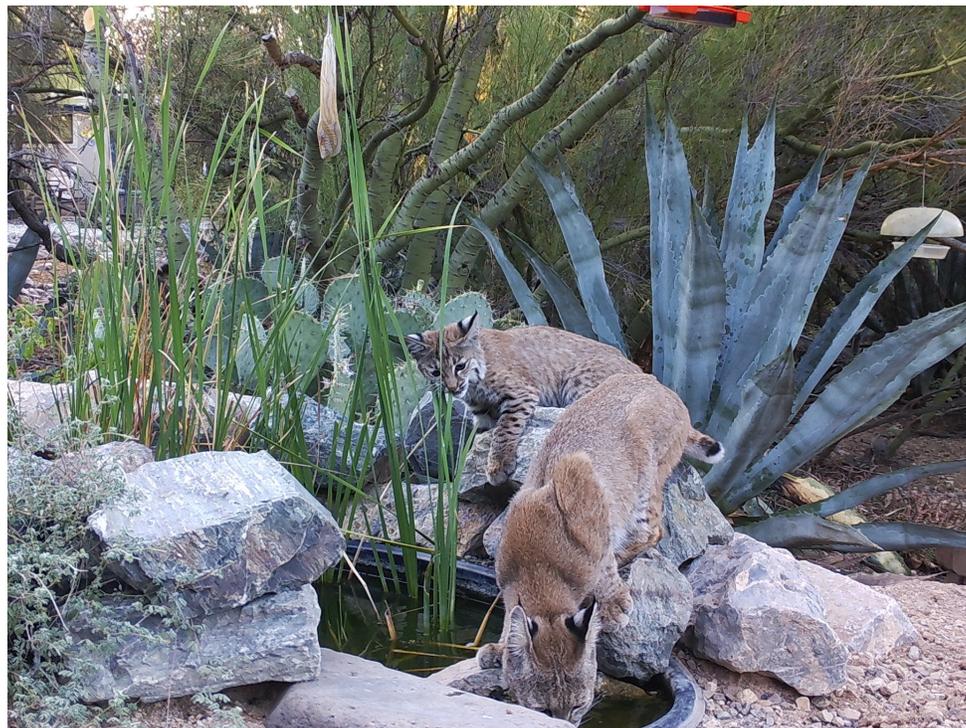
AZTWS Chairperson, Borderlands Foundation for Understudied Plants and Animals

The Bobcats in Tucson (BIT) project—a study of bobcats living along the urban/wildlands interface—was conceived to gain a better understanding of bobcat habits and habitat choices in the Tucson area. Resulting information is intended for use in developing strategies to reduce conflicts between humans and bobcats in the urban environment. This project began in October 2020, and is being conducted by a team of retired wildlife biologists under the umbrella of the Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center. So far, nine bobcats have been fitted with satellite collars for tracking, and researchers are studying the daily movements of these animals. Current information about the project is available on the project website: bobcatsintucson.net.



Bobcat mom with kittens. Credit K. McNerny.

BIT is partially funded under a Heritage Fund Urban Grant from the Arizona Game and Fish Department and through support from the Borderlands Foundation for Understudied Plants and Animals (BFUPA). As a result of the invaluable data being provided by the collared bobcats, a new project goal



Urban bobcat with kitten takes a drink. Credit Kerry Baldwin.

is to have 10 additional bobcats collared in the fall of 2021. So the research team is searching for additional funding to purchase the collars. Each collar costs about \$2,500. The BIT Team currently has pledges for about half of the needed funding. If you are interested in supporting this project, donations are tax deductible. Checks can be made out to: Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center-Attn: Bobcats in Tucson Project, 27026 N 156th St, Scottsdale, AZ 85262.

Meet the 2021 AZTWS Executive Board!



President: Ho Yi Wan,
Assistant Professor, Humboldt State University

Ho Yi Wan earned a Ph.D. from Northern Arizona University and is currently an assistant professor in spatial ecology at Humboldt State University.

President-Elect: Żaneta Kaszta,
Research Fellow, University of Oxford

Żaneta Kaszta is a conservation biologist / landscape ecologist affiliated with University of Oxford and Northern Arizona University.



Treasurer: Kerry Griffis-Kyle,
Associate Professor, Texas Tech University

Kerry Griffis-Kyle is a wildlife ecologist / associate professor at Texas Tech University with research covering Arizona and the Southwest.

Corresponding Secretary: Haley Nelson,
Wildlife Specialist, Arizona Game and Fish Department

Haley Nelson is an information technology and wildlife specialist with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD).



Recording Secretary: Nikhil Nayee,
Undergraduate Student, University of Arizona

Nikhil Nayee is a double-major in Microbiology and Ecology/Evolutionary Biology, a Doris Duke Conservation Scholar, and officer in University of Arizona's Fisheries and Wildlife Services Club.

Board Member: Sidney Riddle,
Aquatic Wildlife Biologist, Arizona Game and Fish Department

Sid earned his M.S. at Arizona State University and is currently an aquatic wildlife biologist monitoring multiple imperiled species.



Board Member: José G. Martínez-Fonseca,
Ph.D. Student, Northern Arizona University

José is a Nicaraguan biologist, population geneticist, and wildlife photographer currently working towards his Ph.D. at Northern Arizona University.

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

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Summer 2021	Jun 18, 2021
Fall 2021	Sep 17, 2021

Email submissions at any time to aztwseeditor@gmail.com.

* * * * *

Continuing Education Grants

AZTWS offers \$2,500 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](#)



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.
- Nominate deserving individuals and groups for the [2021 TWS Awards](#). **Deadline May 1, 2021**
- Want to get more involved with your Chapter? Check out the information available on our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [website](#) for opportunities.
- Have questions for us? Contact us [here](#).

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Mule deer. Credit Brianne Kenny.