



# THE ARIZONA WILDLIFER

2021 Issue 4

 Follow us on Twitter!

 Like us on Facebook!

Fall Edition

## Inside this issue:

<b>Regional News</b>	3
<b>Student Voice</b>	5
<b>Monsoon Toads!</b>	7
<b>Walk for the Wild Events</b>	9
<b>TWS '21 Conference Flyer</b>	10
<b>Share Your Content</b>	11
<b>Cont. Education Grant</b>	11
<b>AZTWS Resources</b>	12

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

**President:** Ho Yi Wan  
(801) 709-8137 [hoiyiwan@gmail.com](mailto:hoiyiwan@gmail.com)

**President Elect:** Zaneta Kaszta  
(928) 419-7425 [zaneta.kaszta@gmail.com](mailto:zaneta.kaszta@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Kerry Griffis-Kyle  
(806) 834-2619 [kerry.griffis-kyle@ttu.edu](mailto:kerry.griffis-kyle@ttu.edu)

**Recording Secretary:** Nikhil Nayee  
(602) 320-6410 [nnayee@email.arizona.edu](mailto:nnayee@email.arizona.edu)

**Corresponding Secretary:** Haley Nelson  
(480) 204-9312 [hnelson@azgfd.gov](mailto:hnelson@azgfd.gov)

**Board Member:** Sid Riddle  
(480) 324-3553 [sriddle@azgfd.gov](mailto:sriddle@azgfd.gov)

**Board Member:** José G. Martínez-Fonseca  
(928) 814-8792 [jm3934@nau.edu](mailto:jm3934@nau.edu)

**Newsletter Editor:** Brian Blais  
[aztwseditor@gmail.com](mailto:aztwseditor@gmail.com)

Contact us:  
<https://aztws.com/about/contact-us/>  
PO Box 87015, Phoenix, AZ 85080



## The President's Message



AZTWS President Ho Yi hiking with his son at Yosemite National Park.

It is with great disappointment that I am delivering this news—after discussing in great depth regarding the potential benefits and risks of different modes to hold the AZ/NM Joint Annual Meeting (JAM), the AZTWS executive board has decided in a unanimous vote to move JAM 2022 to a virtual format. It was truly the most difficult and agonizing decision that I had to make since I assumed the office as the President of the Chapter. Like many of you, I'll deeply miss the camaraderie

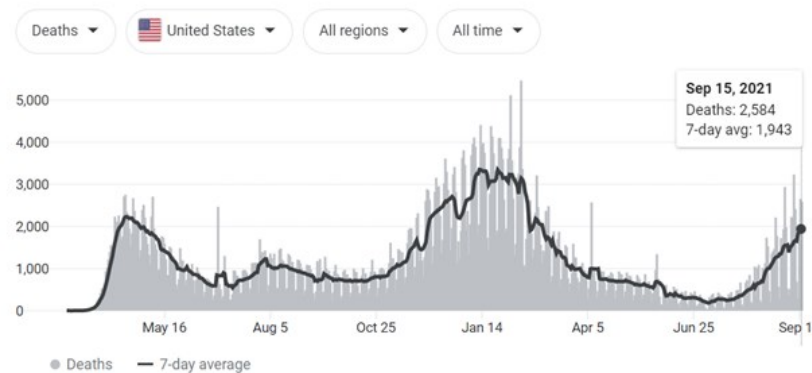
and the fun spirit at an in-person JAM. I also understand that, after nearly two years of suffering due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all fatigued with too many online meetings. Whenever I discover that a favorite conference of mine is switching to the online format, "Not Another One!" will naturally echo in my mind. Resisting the urge to hold an in-person meeting was not easy because the future is so unpredictable. At the moment I pen this message, it is still hard to judge whether our decision to hold a virtual JAM is absolutely right or wrong. If COVID-19 is still prevalent in our country by February 2022, then our decision would be considered wise. Conversely, if COVID-19 is no longer a major threat, then we will seemingly be overreacting or foolish. Here, I just wanted to share with you some of the factors that had determined our decision:

(1) *Current COVID-19 Cases and Trends.*—We wanted to make a fact-based decision and not one that's purely driven by emotions. There is a surge in confirmed new cases and deaths related to COVID-19 (see attached figures). Variants of the virus that are more deadly have also been sweeping our country. Our members' health and safety are our number one concern. We are especially

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Presidents Message cont...

concerned and care for members who may face higher risk associated with coronavirus infection due to age or preexisting medical conditions.



quick decisions (e.g., finalizing payments for the venue); and we realized that the future is just as uncertain to our members as it is to us. Even if a member thinks that they will attend an in-person meeting at this moment, they might change their minds depending on how the COVID-19 situation develops. As stewards of Chapter’s funds, our Executive Board Officers all agreed that it is best to be more prudent by taking the lowest risk.

Again, I understand that this decision might be a disappointing one to you. I think that most, if not all, of us would prefer having an in-person meeting in most circumstances. But we are living in a strange time, and it is our duty to protect the health and safety of our members and to safeguard the assets of the Chapter. I sincerely hope that you will continue to show your support to JAM even when it’s being held virtually, just like you would for an in-person JAM.

Registration information will be coming soon. We will send out an email to all members when it is ready, so please keep an eye out for it. Please register and don’t hesitate to sign-up to present your work. We will love to see all of you. We promise to try our very best to deliver the most pleasant and enjoyable user experience!

~Ho Yi Wan, President of AZTWS

\*\*\*\*\*

(2) *Inclusiveness.*—We wanted our JAM meeting to be as inclusive as possible. It is highly possible that some members may choose to stay home rather than attending an in-person meeting to lower infection risk. We do not want these members to feel left out. A virtual platform provides the flexibility to accommodate as many people as possible.

(3) *Financial Risk.*—Along the same line regarding potential drop in physical attendance, there is a financial risk and burden that the chapter will have to bear. Of course, the opposite can ring true, too, i.e., attendance might increase at an in-person meeting. We have considered sending out a survey to ask our members whether they intend to attend our meeting if held in person. However, we ended up tossing the idea because 1) surveys tend to take a long time to do with low response rate, and we had to make some

## Regional News:

### Southwest Section Tracks

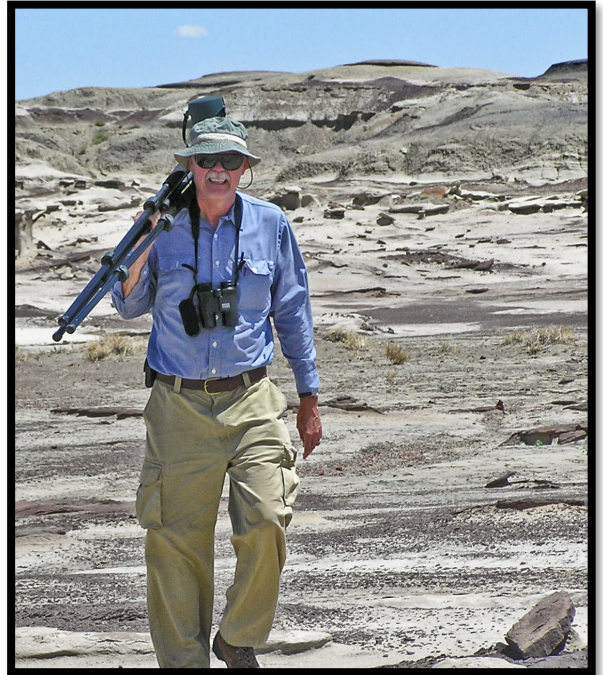
By **Jim Ramakka**  
**TWS Southwest Section Representative**

The past year and a half have been particularly tumultuous for our nation and for The Wildlife Society. I believe the membership can be proud of the way TWS staff responded to the need to pivot from in-person to virtual annual meetings. The conservative budgeting approach developed over the past several years—under the leadership of Past-Presidents Darren Miller and Gary White and President Carol Chambers, and the business acumen and advice of CEO Ed Thompson—enabled us to avoid what could have been a financial crisis. Our membership has not declined as was originally feared as consequences of the pandemic and economic slowdown, and Council has continued addressing the business of our professional society. TWS staff and members of the Conservation Affairs Network have continued to work to influence national policy on wildlife related issues.

Council held two Special Meetings since my last column. On 2 June, Council reviewed and approved a proposed 2022 Operations Plan and an associated 2022 Budget of \$2.295 million for the coming year. Revisions to the existing Energy Development and Invasive Species standing Position Statements were discussed and approved, and the Positions Statements Committee was tasked with examining the feasibility of drafting addition position or issue statements on the use of NEPA Categorical Exclusions and another on Fire Management. The proposed TWS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan was also evaluated and approved.

At the end of the June meeting, CEO Ed Thompson announced his plans to retire on 31 August. Ed played a key role in reshaping TWS into a modern professional society. He was instrumental in employing solid business and planning practices. Everyone on Council expressed their gratitude for Ed's outstanding efforts while wishing him a happy retirement. A search committee was formed to seek a qualified replacement. A total of 21 individuals applied for the position. The applicants were individually scored on 25 factors and ten required elements. The top ten highest scoring applicants were asked to respond to 11 substantive questions in first-round interviews during the last week of August. The top three candidates are now undergoing two more interviews to assess their responses to specific questions. The plan is to have a final selection made and a new CEO hired before the start of our Annual Meeting in November. Until then, as allowed by TWS By Laws, President Carol Chambers is serving as Acting CEO.

A second Special Council Meeting was held on 23 August to address these three important items: establishing the date for the Fall Regular Council Meeting, electing an Interim Corporate Secretary (a position to be held until selection of a new CEO), and amending financial procedures related to a proposed graduate policy fellowship. The Fall Council Meeting will be virtual and held 24–25 October



*(Continued on page 4)*



## Regional News cont...

with portions continued into the TWS Annual Conference. President-elect Gordon Batcheller was elected Interim Corporate Secretary. Finally, Council voted to amend a prior motion to adjust the allocation of pending donated funds to allow a policy fellowship to begin in 2022.

I hope you will all attend the “virtual” [28<sup>th</sup> Annual TWS Conference](#) 1–5 November. The start of TWS Annual Conferences 27 years ago marked a significant milestone in our organization’s evolution into a modern professional society. That process continues to evolve to this day as we seek ways to welcome everyone with an interest in the scientific management and conservation of wildlife resources. The work of the wildlife profession has expanded beyond game species to include a wide variety of taxa, management issues, and issues. The approval of a Canadian Section, and Council support for the formation of a Chapter in Mexico and Student Chapter in Norway, reflect progress toward achieving the TWS goal of representing all wildlife professionals across the globe. The Annual Conference is a great venue for networking and sharing information across the spectrum of our profession.

We *wildlifers* are a unique group of professionals. As Jack Ward Thomas often emphasized, our work is more than a job. It is a true calling—a vocation. He firmly believed “The Wildlife Society gives voice and form and definition to our profession.”<sup>1</sup> That statement rings true today as it has for decades, which is why it has been an honor to serve as the Southwest Section TWS Council Representative for the last 3 years. I am delighted that my good friend, Kathy Granillo, will assume that role at end of this this year’s Fall Council Meeting. Kathy brings a wealth of up-to-date experience and knowledge that will be a great asset to an already outstanding Council.

I hope everyone has a great Fall season and I look forward to re-connecting at the JAM in February!

~Jim

<sup>1</sup>Thomas, J.W. 1985. Professionalism - Commitment Beyond Employment. *Transactions of the Western Section of The Wildlife Society* 21: 1–10. Available at [https://www.wildlifeprofessional.org/western/transactions/transactions\\_1985\\_1.pdf](https://www.wildlifeprofessional.org/western/transactions/transactions_1985_1.pdf)

Jim Ramakka, CWB®  
Southwest Section Representative  
(505) 486-2746  
Email: [j\\_ramakka@msn.com](mailto:j_ramakka@msn.com)  
Phone: 505-486-2746



**THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**  
*Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation*

\* \* \* \* \*

# Student Voice

## Linking Herpetology and Microbiology

By *Samantha Johnson*,

*University of Arizona, Veterinary Science & Wildlife Conservation and Management*

As a young child, I was raised to have a negative outlook on “dangerous” animals. This included coyotes, mountain lions, bees, hawks, snakes, and Gila monsters. When I arrived to my first year of college, I met a friend that was studying snakes and Gila monsters. I thought they were absolutely crazy! Eventually, I came along with this friend to look for snakes and lizards during hikes or driving surveys. The first snake we came across was a gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*). With confidence, my friend handed me the gophersnake to take a picture with it. Oh, my goodness, no one would believe how nervous I was. Hands sweaty, body shaking, and eyes wide, I took the snake and posed for the picture awkwardly. Though at first this experience made me nervous, I could not help myself wanting to find more snakes!

It was not too long after that I asked this friend if their wildlife lab—that focused on snakes and Gila monsters—had any volunteer or paid opportunities. My friend reached out to the lab head, Dr. Matt Goode, with my interest which landed me a volunteer interview. Dr. Goode was thrilled to hear about my interest and immediately hired me as a volunteer. Within my first week of volunteering, I got to capture and handle my favorite species on the project, a Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*)! The feeling bewildered me, and soon enough, the efforts to protect them through research did too.

Four years later, I continue to work on Dr. Goode’s snake and Gila monster projects. We even created a new project focused on Gila monster health. Gratefully sponsored by T&E Inc. and Tucson Herpetological Society, the Gila monster health project looks at their digestive system microbes. Unfortunately, as important as microbes are to promote digestion of foods and protect health, they are highly understudied, especially in wildlife. With this, it is my goal to contribute to and expand studies into wildlife and microorganism relationships. This will help scientists understand many attributes to an animal’s digestive and health needs. Many animal groups (e.g., amphibians, birds, insects) are understudied in this context, and reptiles suffer severely more than others. There are many thoughts of why this may be, however, the fact of the matter is we need to begin implementing these studies



Sam with a gophersnake. Credit Alexis Cazares.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)



soon. Reptiles need our help in conservation efforts, and where we lack most is understanding their relationship with microbes and how those interactions impact health. Without foundational knowledge for understudied groups like reptiles, and perhaps biased focus on other groups, we risk the loss of incredibly important animals that our society indirectly depends on.

Gila monster observed during a summer night. Credit Samantha Johnson.

\* \* \* \* \*



A vibrant canyon spotted whiptail (i.e., giant spotted whiptail; *Aspidoscelis stictogramma*) admiring an ephemeral pool at Saguaro National Park, East District. Credit Ian Adrian.



## Monsoon Toads!

*By Heather Bateman, Annika Enloe, and Brett Montgomery  
Arizona State University*

Anyone else seeing lots of toads this year? Maybe an abundance of butterflies and moths or other wildlife? It has been an interesting monsoon season. After two very dry summers with little precipitation, monsoon 2021 has delivered in a big way. According to the National Weather Service Phoenix, as of 5 September, this year ranks second for the most days (20) of measurable rain since 1896! If you want to view an impressive map showing the monsoon green-up, head over to NASA to look at NDVI values from August compared to June [<https://go.nasa.gov/3gmAPpx>]. I think being a wildlife ecologist makes us all weather junkies.



Juvenile, recently metamorphosed, Sonoran Desert toads (*Incilius alvarius*) at Gateway, Mesa, AZ in September 2021. Nearly all animals have been less than 30 g. Animal handling under IACUC protocol # 20-1803T. Credit Heather Bateman.

(Continued on page 8)



(Continued from page 7)

How do you know if this is really a good year for toads, or any species? Long-term data certainly help! We have been running trap arrays in Mesa on the Gateway Airport since 2010. The ASU Polytechnic campus is right next door, and we have been fortunate to have a good partnership with the Airport. Trap arrays are checked daily when open and are in operation during the fall and spring semesters. The habitat is mostly creosote flats with clay loam soils and the occasional F-16 touch-and-go. The project serves as a great experience for undergrads in the field and allows us collect long-term data on herpetofauna and ground arthropods. We have captured two anuran species at Gateway, Couch's spadefoot (*Scaphiopus couchii*) and Sonoran Desert toad (*Incilius alvarius*). From 2010 to 2020, we



captured only eight toads. So, when Bateman and Enloe were checking traps recently, we were underprepared for the number of toads captured! Over three days, we captured 83 Sonoran Desert toads. Meaning, 90% of all captures of toads in our long-term project have occurred in 2021—a 10-fold increase, and the season is not over yet.

The dataset from 2010 to 2020 for lizards and arthropods is publicly available.

#### Reference

Bateman, H. 2021. Long-term monitoring of reptiles and ground arthropods near the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, Mesa, Arizona, USA, ongoing since 2010 ver 2. Environmental Data Initiative. [DOI](#).

Adult Sonoran Desert toad (*Incilius alvarius*). Animal handling under IACUC protocol # 21-1816R. Credit Brett Montgomery.

\*\*\*\*\*



# Urban Wildlife Conservation Day – 9 October 2021

More information at [USFWS](https://www.usfws.gov) and [Virtual Running Club](https://www.virtualrunningclub.com)



**WALK FOR THE WILD**  
OCT 10-16, 2021



Regístrate para caminar Asociación Urbana de Phoenix (está al final del menú desplegable) ¡Registro gratis!

Un evento en persona el 9 de octubre de 8 a 11 a.m. en el Área de Habitat Restauración del Río Salado, ¡Todos los participantes registrados son bienvenidos!  
**(2439 S. Central Ave. Phoenix AZ 85004)**

La Asociación Urbana de Los Ríos (Phoenix) se enorgullece de asociarse con Audubon Southwest y la Ciudad de Phoenix para este evento.



¿Sabías caminar en la naturaleza?

¿Ayudar a su sistema inmunológico?



¿Ayudar a tu cerebro a funcionar?



¿Es un buen ejercicio?



¿Aumentar su conciencia de la naturaleza?




**WALK FOR THE WILD**  
OCT 10-16, 2021



Sign up to walk for the Phoenix Urban Partnership today (scroll to the bottom of the dropdown)! It's FREE!

An in-person event for those registered will be held on **October 9, 8-11 am** at the Río Salado Habitat Restoration Area  
**(2439 S. Central Ave. Phoenix AZ 85004)**

The Los Ríos (Phoenix) Urban Partnership is proud to partner with Audubon Southwest and the City of Phoenix for this event.



Did you know walking in nature can

Boost your Immune System?



Improve Brain Function?



Is Good Exercise?



Increase your Awareness of Nature?



# THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY'S 28TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

LEARN. NETWORK. ENGAGE.



WHEN  
NOV 1 – 5, 2021



WHERE  
VIRTUAL

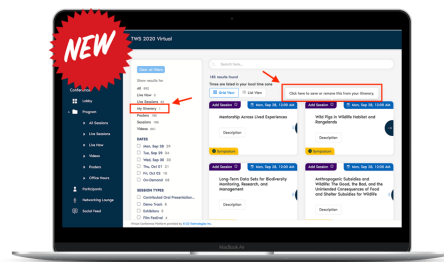
## Experience TWS Live!

## From the comfort of your home or office!

The stage is set for The Wildlife Society's 28th Annual Conference! Our first virtual conference was an incredible success, and we're going to build on that experience this fall! The virtual format makes it easier than ever before to participate in North America's largest gathering of wildlife researchers and managers. Don't miss your chance to advance your career and the profession as a whole. Roughly 1,000+ educational, training, and networking opportunities make up our robust program that includes the latest in wildlife science, technology, and other contemporary issues affecting our field. Check back here for news, updates, and other information throughout the year. We'll also be making conference announcements on wildlife.org and in our other TWS communication channels. See you in November!

### Registration

New opportunities to Learn, Network, and Engage!



Visit Conference Website for more information

<https://twsconference.org/>





# 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>
<b>Winter 2022</b>	<b>Dec 17, 2021</b>
<b>Spring 2022</b>	<b>Mar 18, 2022</b>

Email submissions at any time to [aztwseeditor@gmail.com](mailto: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.
- Want to get more involved with your Chapter? Check out the information available on our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [website](#) for opportunities.
- University of Arizona graduate student Deandra Jones featured in TWS Wildlife Vocalizations article [here](#). [Check out Deandra's excellent article in our [Fall 2020 issue](#)]
- Longtime member Tom Britt is looking to donate a collection of >50 years of TWS publications and other library content. If interested, please contact Tom directly at [rtquail.flagstaff@gmail.com](mailto:rtquail.flagstaff@gmail.com). AZTWS holds no responsibility beyond this advertisement.
- Have questions for us? Contact us [here](#).

\* \* \* \* \*



Monsoonal rains around southern Arizona have facilitated many happy toads. A chorus of Great Plains toads (*Anaxyrus cognatus*) were orchestrating at an ephemeral pool near the southern Arizona–New Mexico border. A male (left) tries his luck at serenading a female. Meanwhile, a green toad (below; *A. debilis*) tries calling among the deafening chaos. Credit Brian Blais.

