

The Murreletter

Society for Northwestern
Vertebrate Biology

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Vertebrate biologists invaded Arcata, California, for the 2003 SNVB Annual Meeting, while half a world away a different invasion began. It was a bit surreal to be immersed in our brain trust while world events of such global interest and impact unfolded. What timing! I was surprised that over the next two days relatively few conversations were relaying the external play-by-play. Instead, we were catching up on friendships, making new alliances, learning how the year of work and life had progressed, and immersing in research syntheses that had been put into posters and talks. Arcata was our island of time together.

Our California coastal contingent put on an amazing meeting. The reason to hold our annual meetings at outlying locations again was keenly evident. Our southern membership has surged. The tri-day convention was kick-started by two Wednesday workshops, Mollusks and Stream Amphibians. The Arcata organizers were ready, and the workshops and meeting were pulled off seamlessly. Over the next two days of >60 contributed and invited papers and posters, I noted that SNVB has become more technologically savvy each year. Powerpoint was the modus operandi, as were posters created and printed using computers.

To me, the Plenary and Keynote speakers were the highlight of the meeting. The theme of David Rains Wallace's plenary speech struck a chord during the meeting. It was not a stretch to find "systems and symbols" in every single presentation of the meeting. They are unifying concepts among the different vertebrate taxa on which we focus. I read Wallace's book *The Turquoise Dragon* on the way to Arcata, and

having him as the plenary speaker near the locations of his fictional story was a personal treat indeed. What a delight it and he was.

Ted Papenfuss stood at the podium before us and wrapped us into his Afghan adventure, taking us to a forbidden and forbidding world. In 1999 the country was run by the Taliban, isolated from the outside world and had suffered decades of war. Ted found the nation-in-turmoil had a UN representative, by simply typing taliban.com into his web-browser. His e-liaison soon became his advocate, and eventual escort. We saw his armed escorts noosing lizards with glee and poppy fields in full bloom. Those of us in that room gained new insights to the Afghan people. At the end, his coup de grace was the Taliban commander sending his troops for an impromptu lecture on the diverse herpetofauna he had collected. Then, after being so honoured, he had to be smuggled out of the country in the back of a truck. He's our blend of a 21st century Gerald Durrell, Crocodile Dundee, Steve Irwin, Indiana Jones and Robert Stebbins! He clearly wove his magic on the Taliban as he did on us, and we both similarly were astounded. From both, he gained our utmost respect and we honour him for the herp-knowledge he was acquiring from their homeland for the world to know. Perhaps David Rains Wallace was inspired to write another novel?

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-Cheers, Dede Olson

THANK YOU!

We really appreciate the hard work that many

people put in to make this year's annual meeting a well-oiled machine. Special thanks to Don Ashton, who led the charge and lost the most sleep, and Hart Welsh, our VP oversight man who talked Don and others into it. Thanks also to The North Coast Chapter of The Wildlife Society, our co-sponsors for the event.

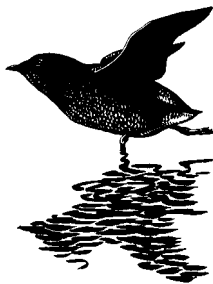
Additional thank yous are needed for our outgoing Executive Board members, who spent 2+ years in service to the Society: Bill Leonard, Laura Friis, Sally Butts, Rebecca Thompson, and Elissa Ostergaard. You all are fantastic and I hope you will consider running for open slots in the future.

Finally, a welcome is due to the new Board members. Although we did not have a candidate on the ballot for secretary, we had write-in votes for 2 members and hence asked if they would split the position. Welcome to Erin Hyde, Secretary, and Richard Nauman, Murreletter Editor! Also, welcome to David Pilliod (Inland VP), Dick Weisbrod (WA VP), and Marc Hayes (Trustee).

- Dede Olson, President

PREPARE FOR NEXT MARCH!

The Society for Northwest Vertebrate Biology has chosen Ellensburg, Washington as the site for the 2004 Annual Meeting. Stimulating papers, intense intellectual intercourse, wonderful workshops, fabulous field trips, and unabashed social festivities are planned. Amaze your friends and astound your colleagues with your most electrifying researches and observations in the paper *you* present in Ellensburg. Watch for the call for papers coming soon in a Murreletter near you. If you want a head start or you wish help in planning, contact A.R. Weisbrod at weisbrod@rockisland.com.



2003 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2003 annual meeting, held March 19-21st in

Arcata California, was a huge success. The paper sessions were held on the Humboldt State University campus nestled in the coastal redwoods above town. The meeting was launched by David Rains Wallace, author of the Klamath Knot and other works, who gave a scintillating keynote address on the world class status of the biodiversity represented in the Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion. His talk was followed by over 50 other speakers presenting their current work, with an excellent lead symposium consisting of papers focused on the headwaters stream environment.

The conference was attended by several hundred people interested in the latest research on vertebrates in the Pacific Northwest. The banquet, hosted at the North Coast Inn, was a great meal and fantastic party with copious amounts of the local brew consumed. The banquet highlight was a slideshow by Ted Papenfuss, a research associate at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at U.C. Berkeley, of his herpetology field trip to Afghanistan as an honoured guest of the Taliban. Brent Matsuda closed the evening with a slide of his adventures in Patagonia. Two workshops and two field trips were also offered, with the stream amphibian sampling workshop receiving the most interest.

-Hart Welsh, VP for Southern Region

ARCATA 2003 BEST PAPER

Drum roll please... I tallied the results for best paper and here they are. The paper with the most votes was Laura Burkholder who presented "Seasonal activity patterns and life history of post-metamorphic tailed frogs in coastal Northern California". In a close second was Andie Herman who presented "Seasonal habitat use and movement patterns of the Shasta salamander". Mollie Manier's presentation of "Does variation at neutral molecular markers reflect ecological variation in a garter snake?" came in third. Honorable Mentions go to Don Ashton, Chris Sheridan, Louise Mead, Doug DeGross and Louise Trippe. There were 28 papers that received votes.

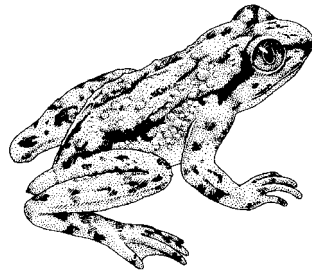
-Tara Chestnut, Trustee

STREAM AMPHIBIAN WORKSHOP WELL ATTENDED

The stream amphibian workshop in Arcata was a great success thanks to the excellent speakers and

well-organized field trip. Bruce Bury introduced the day's theme with an overview of the ecology, status, and management needs of Northwest stream amphibians. Several methodological presentations followed, including coverage of rapid assessment techniques, area-constrained and habitat-based sampling, stream bank and nocturnal surveys, and usefulness of fisheries-type data, such as snorkeling and electrofishing.

Marc Hayes concluded the morning session with a quantitative comparison of several sampling methods. During the afternoon field trip on Simpson Resource Company land, participants learned how to survey for and capture the various stream-associated amphibian species. The intermittent showers helped bring out the amphibians and participants practiced their identification skills. Thanks to all those who participated in the workshop, the speakers, Lowell Diller and Simpson crew for organizing the field trip, and Don Ashton for all of his help. For those who missed the workshop, plan on coming to Ellensburg, WA in 2004.



-David Pilliod, Inland VP

TREASURER'S REPORT

Membership applications and renewals for this year have continued to trickle in over the past few months. We currently have over 260 individual members. More than 40 of these are new members, mostly from California. Welcome to you all.

-Julie Grialou, Treasurer



MOLLUSK TRAINING A HIT

On Wednesday, March 19, the SNWVB sponsored a one-day workshop on identifying terrestrial mollusk species of the Pacific Northwest, focusing on species listed under the Survey and Manage Program of the

Northwest Forest Plan. The workshop was well-attended, with about a dozen participants and several assistant instructors. Nancy Duncan, mollusk team leader for the Survey and Manage Program, led the morning presentation. Nancy gave an overview of important morphological characters used in identification and showed a series of slides of local species. Participants then worked through a set of lab stations of dozens of slug and snail specimens, including some live animals, and were informally tested on their new skills.

In the afternoon, the workshop headed east to Simpson Timber Company land for a field trip. In addition to meeting a pair of spotted owls, the group found a number of mollusk species at a few different sites. In particular, a high diversity and abundance of micro-snails (less than about 4mm in length) was found at one maple-dominated riparian site. Fortunately the heavy rain from the morning did not, for the most part, continue into the afternoon, and the group stayed happy and dry.

-Paul Hohenlohe

NEWS FROM AROUND WASHINGTON

Planning for the 2004 annual meeting in Ellensburg is underway by Tara Chestnut, Bill Leonard, and Dick Weisbrod. The meeting is proposed to be held in conjunction with the Northwest Scientific Association the third week of March 2004, spring break at Central Washington University. If you would like to help out, contact Dick for details.

The University of Washington's Friday Harbor Marine Laboratories are holding a summer long Centenary Celebration with a series of special lectures, potluck suppers, and a jazz performance by lab and local musicians. Free tours of the R/V *Centennial*, a newly acquired converted 70 ft fishing vessel, are available upon inquiry at the Lab. The University of Washington established its marine biological laboratories in Friday Harbor, Washington during the summer of 1903.

-Dick Weisbrod, Washington VP

OSU PRESS PUBLISHES COMPREHENSIVE OREGON BIRD BOOK

The Oregon State University Press has published a comprehensive, 768-page reference guide to the 486 bird species known to inhabit the state. The new book, "Birds of Oregon: A General Reference," was edited by David B. Marshall, Matthew G. Hunter, and Alan L. Contreras. It offers information on each species of bird, and their habitats and life histories. More than a hundred contributing authors volunteered their work and expertise to create "Birds of Oregon," which includes line drawings by wildlife artist Elva Hamerstrom Paulson and data from the Oregon Breeding Bird Atlas Project.

This is the first comprehensive reference to Oregon's birds published since Ira N. Gabrielson and Stanley G. Jewett's landmark book of the same name, "Birds of Oregon," published in 1940-also by OSU. More than two dozen individuals or organizations helped sponsor the book including federal agencies, timber companies, environmental groups, scientists, and utilities. "Birds of Oregon" sells for \$65 and is available at bookstores or by calling 1-800-426-3797.

- Tom Booth, Oregon State University Press

SPECIES AT RISK 2004: PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS

The Species at Risk 2004: Pathways to Recovery Conference, to be held in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, March 2-6, 2004, has four themes related to the conservation and recovery of species and ecosystems at risk: The Science of Recovery; the Mechanics and Logistics of Recovery; the Human Face of Recovery and Stewardship; and Successes and Challenges: Lessons from the Field.

The deadline for abstract submission is October 15, 2003. Authors are invited to submit abstracts for proposed presentations and posters that address conference themes and subjects, as described on the conference website: www.speciesatrisk2004.ca



PNARC NEWS

News and



Views from The Pacific Northwest Amphibian and Reptile Consortium

The Pacific Northwest continues to be a very active region relative to amphibian conservation issues. Our understanding of the regional fauna has advanced considerably in the last decade, with application of new molecular techniques to explore biological diversity within taxa, and studies into effects of various agents on amphibian populations. Cooperative efforts among agencies, institutions, and societies have been pivotal for inventory and monitoring, concern-species management, and education.

Research: Both university and agency scientists are contributing new knowledge about our endemic fauna that is having direct bearing on their management. Genetic studies have broadened our understanding of the regional amphibian fauna; new taxa have been identified (*Rana luteiventris*, *Ascaphus montanus*, *Aneides vagrans*), while populations representing geographically structured divergent lineages are being detected in other species.

Studies of land management effects on amphibians are ongoing. Several programs are advancing our knowledge of species' distributions, status, and trends. First, the federal Northwest Forest Plan covers about 10 million ha of forestlands west of the Cascade Range. Since 1994, surveys for 5 rare terrestrial plethodontid salamanders have been mandated under the Survey and Manage provision of this plan (protocols available at: <http://www.or.blm.gov/surveyandmanage/sp.htm>), resulting in considerable data on terrestrial herpetological assemblages on federal Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands, confirmation of rarity for 4 species. Second, Aquatic-Riparian Effectiveness Monitoring under the Northwest Forest Plan is compiling amphibian and fish occurrences in streams across 250 6th-field watersheds in their assessment of regional federal watershed conditions (<http://www.reo.gov/monitoring/watershed/aremp-compile.htm>). Third, the US Department of Interior has its own "ARMI", the Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative (<http://edc2.usgs.gov/armi>) in the

Pacific Northwest. Fourth, an inventory and monitoring program is ongoing on US National Park Service lands. National parks in Washington State (Olympic National Park, North Cascades National Park, and Mount Rainier National Park) have completed the first inventory stage of the program. Lastly, Charlie Crisafulli (US Forest Service) and colleagues continue to monitor amphibian populations in the blast zone of Mt. St. Helens, which erupted in 1980.

Education: A new emphasis on amphibian and reptile education is developing in our region. Many individuals, institutions, and agencies have been playing key roles, providing instruction to public and school audiences, land managers and policy makers, and science professionals. The focus of these efforts has been on the importance of the regional fauna within ecosystems, species identification, status and trends, and methodologies for inventory and monitoring. A variety of communication tools have been used, including courses and workshops such as the stream amphibian workshop held in conjunction with the Arcata SNWVB meeting, publications such as Maxell et al. 2003, *Herpetology in Montana*, *Northwest Fauna 5* (see <http://www.snwvb.org/>), and websites like the digital atlas of Idaho (<http://imnh.isu.edu/digitalatlas/>).

Dr. Charles R. Peterson of Idaho State University represented the Pacific Northwest region at the April 2003 herp-education conference in Gainesville, Florida (<http://www.parcplace.org/CurrentMeetings/SEPARC/Education-Fla2003.htm>). Collaboration between the US national Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) and members of the US-Canada Pacific Northwest Amphibian and Reptile Consortium has resulted in a working group that is intended to organize and focus future regional efforts.

-Dede Olson

NEW SECRETARY AND MURRELETTER EDITOR

There were no official candidates for secretary in the last election. However, there was a write-in campaign organized by unknown forces that resulted in a tie vote. At the 2003 meeting the board decided to split the duties of the secretary position. After some encouragement I agreed to take over editing the Murreletter and Erin Hyde will be taking minutes at

board meetings and covering the other duties of the secretary position.

I have worked with plethodontid salamanders for the last 6 years at the US Forest Services research lab in Corvallis, OR. I have a wide variety of experience ranging from spotted owls in Olympic National Park to small mammal trapping in the Siskiyou Mountains. I look forward to editing the Murreletter and encourage everyone to send me things to publish at RNAuman@fs.fed.us.

Erin Hyde has worked for the last 3 years with the USGS BRD studying the effects of fire on amphibians and aquatic systems. Prior to coming to the northwest Erin worked at Great Smokey Mountains National Park designing monitoring methods for salamanders.

We both look forward to being more involved in the society.

-Richard Nauman, Murreletter Editor

THE EX-VEE PEE'S CLUB SUMMER RETREAT

When you join SNVB, you know you are cool. You get a cool journal and cool newsletter. You get to go to cool meetings and meet cool people. And sometimes that lands you a cool job. What could be cooler than that? Being a board member. You probably think that actually means "bored" member. Not so. It's lots of fun...and...board members bond for life! This is a recent case history...

In 2002, ex-board member Larry Jones (former WA Vice President and President) moved to Arizona seeking sunshine, its incredible biodiversity, thunder-boomers, sunsets, and snakes (not necessarily in that order). Upon announcing his departure from the Great Northwest (at the Hood River SNVB meeting in 2002), he was told he was a loser and would never again catch razor clams or play toss the newt or find Van Dyke's salamander nests or go mushrooming or scrape algae off his sidings or go to a SNVB meeting or *not* see a lunar eclipse when it is happening or catch sturgeons, halibuts, salmon, murrelets, smelts, cabezons, flounders, banana slugs, Rhyacotritonids, Dicamptodontids, lingcods, and the like. He moved, with his kicking-and-screaming wife (Janet Jones, also an ex-board member) in tow, away from their colleagues, friends, thespians, and acquaintances. They had to get used to a small town and a new mindset. Larry had to do NEPA for a living, rather than the cushy and biologically fulfilling lifestyle of research. Larry and Janet missed their

slimy (but fun) friends from the Rainy Northwest.

But SNVB'ers and other comrades came to the rescue. In late July 2003, Bill Leonard (also ex-WA Vee-Pee and Prez), Brad Moon (ex-WA VP, now at The University of Louisiana), Elissa Ostergaard (ex-WA VP, now living in Tucson, AZ, for similar reasons as Larry—now Urban Biologist for Arizona Game and Fish Dept.), Tom Skinner (who would have been a VP if he lived in NW), and Chad Munich (N. AZ student and potential future VP) joined Larry in SE AZ to join in ¡Herp Trek 2003! Our quest was to see a Bunch-O-Herps, sip a few Margaritas, and tell tall tales (but without Rich Nauman, they are medium-sized tales). This is our story...

Actually, this wasn't planned as an ex-VP Club meeting. We didn't even realize we had four board members until Bill said, "Hey, we have two SNVB ex-presidents and two SNVB ex-Vee Pees for WA"...then we realized that the ex-Prezesses were



also ex-WA VP's for the Society. Upon realizing this, we immediately took a photo for the SNVB Scrap Book, before our herping jaunt near Sahuarita, AZ. There was much rejoicing, but we shed a communal tear for many of the people we wished to be in our midst.

OK, now the story of the Trek... Bill and Brad flew into Phoenix International Airport, rented a swanky blue Pee-Tee cruiser then went to Tucson to pick up some rattlesnakes for Brad's research. That afternoon they arrived in Safford, AZ and hooked up with Larry at Concho Villa (the Jones's Safford flat). Almost immediately they headed to Kartchner Caverns State Park, as a staging ground for ¡Herp Trek 2003! But before they departed, they left a dozen D-backs in bags in an aquarium at Concho Villa, so that Janet could be lullabied to sleep. Because of the rains and cool temps that week, snakes were few and amphibians abundant. Bill, who gravitates to slimy things, was in hog heaven (local vernacular = javelina heaven), except that we missed the incredible breeding frenzies of early monsoon toad breeding by about a week in that area. We cell-phoned Elissa, who was doing a breeding toad survey in Altar Valley with Cecil Schwalbe et al. She said a large variety of toads were "all-over-the-place" in breeding chorus mode

(these toad-call frenzies only last a few days during early, heavy monsoonal rains). Unfortunately, Elissa was too far away to join that evening. But we saw lots of Woodhouse's Toads and other species, so it wasn't a complete bust.

The next day, we got a VIP tour of the last stronghold of the Ramsey Canyon Leopard Frog at the Beatty Ranch in the Huachuca Mountains. We then wandered up Miller Canyon and Brad found a most beautiful female Banded Rock Rattlesnake. That night we hooked up with Elissa and Tom and headed to warmer climes near the desert since it was too cool elsewhere. We saw a good variety of toads. The next day we ventured to White Rock Campground and set up camp in the Pajarito Mountains. We went up world-famous Sycamore



Canyon and saw a couple Mountain Skinks, possible Lowland Leopard Frogs, Toe-biters (Belostomatidae), and

Sonoran Mud Turtles, including really small. We headed to Nogales, and after a lovely authentic Mexican dinner, we saw more toads, including some very beautiful Couch's Spadefoot Toads and a recently squished desert kingsnake.

It was particularly fun (for Brad and Larry) because Bill and Elissa had rather strong reactions to the secretions of the Mexican spadefoot toad (sneezing,



snotting, coughing, severe whining), which smells like peanuts. The next morning was particularly rewarding, when we walked up a wash and found some Mountain Skinks and espied a large, always-beautiful, Black-

tailed Rattlesnake. The next day, Bill, Brad, and Larry went back to Safford. Road-cruising that night yielded two of the seriously venomous Mojave Green rattlesnakes (one had a very bad attitude) and a tiny little night snake.

The next morning, Larry got up at the crack of dawn and climbed to 9,500 ft in the Doug-fir/spruce forests of the Pinaleños to give a natural history talk to several Apache tribes. After Brad and Bill awoke, they joined ¡GilaMan! and went looking for mollusks (6 endemic species in the Pinaleños), millipedes, and Twin-spotted Rattlesnakes. They found all of the above. There were so many snails out, Bill was particularly giddy. Later that day and eve was the Soiree at Larry's house, where we bonded and told stories about the really cool herps we had seen, and those we wish we had seen. We toasted Hornitos to Don, Rebecca, Elke, and other close personal ex-board-member friends we missed. A good time was had, even though we all sucked at horseshoes (except Brad...apparently a world-class tosser). The highlight was when we de-rattlesnaked Larry's Dalmatian, Domino. A few of us snuck out the back to do this task inconspicuously, so as not to disturb any potential snake-o-phobics at the party. Of course, everyone knew about it immediately, and the whole lot of them watched the shenanigans. We all watched, videotaped, or snake-wrangled as Domino leaped out of his spots upon approaching a western D-back. It went pretty well, except one of the neighbor kids wanted to crush the snake's head repeatedly with a really large rock because it came within 50 meters of him. After extensive searching, we eventually found the last of Domino's spots.

Well, maybe it wasn't the best herping trip in SE AZ, but herping is like fishing—it can be good or it can be bad (and SE AZ is world-class, so it can be real good!)...but we did actually see lots of critters and most importantly, we got to experience the great camaraderie of friends from SNVB. We plan to do ¡Herp Trek! annually (not just board members are invited!)...and we will probably have an itinerary that will allow others to join us at places and times for ¡Herp Trek 2004! If interested, email Larry Jones at nardlee@cableone.net.

-submitted by the ex-Vee-Pee's Club

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