

The Murreletter

Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology

Volume 13, No. 3

December 2005

President's Message

Hello All SNVBers!

'Tis December, summer has abandoned us, there's frost on the pumpkin, the mice are moving back in, and something like hibernation has struck. Feeling

tired....feeling hungry......feeling slow...... feeling sleepy..... blow off running in the cold, wet, darkness...rent a movie. Better yet, just wake me when it's Spring. NO! Hold on! Wake me when there's turkey and presents!



Come rain, hail, snow, more rain, migrating geese or shortness of day length, your friendly conference planning committee has been busily plotting the 2006 joint



annual conference with the Washington Chapter of The Wildlife Society. Hannah Anderson, Tara Chestnut, Marc Hayes and Aimee McIntyre of SNVB, and Susan Piper and Peter Singleton of TWS have been doing the heavy lifting so far. Thanks you guys!

The 2006 conference has expanded from the usual 3 days into a full week of events, including a number of unique workshops, symposia and special sessions. **IT'S GONNA BE BIG!** Given the expansive agenda, we are looking for enthusiastic folks to help make it all happen; there will be many interesting ways to help. Please contact Marc Hayes (hayesmph@dfw.wa.gov) or me (lewisjcl@dfw.wa.gov) if you'd like to pitch in. Also, don't get caught off guard or wait too long, consider submitting an abstract for an interesting presentation or poster, sooner rather than later (See page 3 for more details).

No doubt many of you have been keeping track of the congressional reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the debate over oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Recently the U.S. House of Representatives approved revised ESA language that substantially diminishes protections provided by the act. The Senate will also have its chance to alter ESA language for the reauthorization and it will be interesting to see how their version compares to the House version. The reauthorization process coincides with heightened concerns in the Pacific states and British Columbia for the future of the northern spotted owl. The Canadian Spotted Owl Recovery Team and the BC Provincial Government are now considering many options for recovery. These include initiating a captive-breeding and release program in an effort to help prevent their extirpation from British Columbia, the only province in Canada where the species occurs. Loss and fragmentation of old-growth forest habitat, and competition between invasive barred owls and spotted owls are concerns for biologists throughout the species' range, and the lack of a trend toward recovery indicates that additional

efforts are required to help this species. The spotted owl has benefited from much more research and ESA protection than many other species, and still its recovery is uncertain. To what extent will we be able to protect the multitude of *poorly* understood imperiled species if the ESA is significantly weakened?



I have not done a formal or even informal survey of folks in my small corner of the world but it is my impression that more people are riding bikes to work, at ... Continued on page 3

Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology

... the oldest scientific association devoted to the study of terrestrial vertebrates in the Pacific Northwest.

- Established in 1920

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Who we are...

The Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology was founded in 1920 as the Pacific Northwest Bird and Mammal Society. Long recognized as the preeminent union of ornithologists and mammalogists in the Pacific Northwest, the society adopted its current name in 1988 to reflect an expanded taxonomic scope that included amphibians and reptiles. The scope expanded again in 1999 to include fish. Today the society strives to promote close working relationships among ornithologists, mammalogists, herpetologists, and ichthyologists in our region; foster exchange of scientific information and interest in the study of vertebrates; and offer a forum for these activities through meetings and publications.

Membership

All persons or institutions interested in the study of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and fishes are eligible for membership. Individual members receive the Northwestern Naturalist and the Murreletter, our newsletter. Other SNVB publications, such as Northwest Fauna, are available at a reduced rate. Other privileges of membership include notification of all meetings of SNVB, power to vote in SNVB meetings and elections, and the privilege of holding office in SNVB.

For more information or to become a member: http://www.snwvb.org

The Murreletter

The Murreletter is published 3 times yearly and is distributed to the members of the Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology. Submission of stories, meeting announcements and other material of interest to members of the society is encouraged. Submissions should be sent to Murreletter Editor Ian Reid. To receive the Murreletter electronically, which is encouraged, please provide your current email address to SNVB Treasurer Julie Grialou.

... Continued from page 1

least this last summer. I had been feeling like a slacker, driving a flat 8 miles to work at 24 MPG when gas was heading toward \$3 and I had been avoiding most forms of exercise. I won't say that it was the debate over oil exploration in ANWR that put me over the top, but it inspired me to make some sort of effort to curb my demand for oil. So I got a used road bike—the pedaling kind. I don't know if it helped, but it made me feel a little less guilty. In retrospect, it's hard to know if the motivation is really about reducing my demand for oil or if it's about trying to preserve my opportunity to see a vast unaltered patch of the planet. The lesson of never seeing Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin or The Who is to make sure you don't miss the other once-in-a-lifetime things. I've not been to ANWR, but the possibility that oil exploration could begin there makes me think I better go soon. The whup, whup, whup of helicopters, grumbling of diesel engines, and clatter of drill rig assembly interrupt my imaginings of wide-open wilderness and expanses of undisturbed habitat. David Brower (1912-2000), pioneering environmentalist and the first director of the Sierra Club, knew how to size up situations when national treasures were at stake: "I used to say during the battle over the Grand Canyon dams, that I didn't care how many dams they built in the Grand Canyon, provided they built a separate and equal Grand Canyon somewhere else first".

—Jeff

2005 Society Summary Statistics

- 213 individual members
- 90 institutional members
- Checking Account = \$12,838.49
- Savings Account = \$17,400.43
- CD = \$22,303.56
- -Submitted by Julie Grialou, Treasurer

New Murreletter Editor Needed

The current Editor is resigning his post and a new volunteer Editor is needed to produce the quarterly newsletter. For more information or to express interest, please contact current Editor Ian Reid (ireid@fs.fed.us) or President Jeff Lewis.

First Call for 2006 SNVB and WA-TWS Annual Meeting Papers and Abstracts

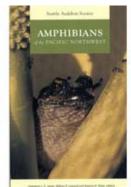
The 2006 Annual Meeting theme is *Challenges of a Changing World: Historical Perspectives and New Innovations.* The meeting is from 27 March to 1 April in Olympia, Washington at the Evergreen State College campus and is being cosponsored by the Western Forests Carnivore Working Group, International Canopy Network, Partners in Flight, and the Pacific Northwest Amphibian and Reptile Consortium. Don't miss signing up for some of the diverse workshops and fieldtrips available at the meeting.

Abstracts are due electronically **by 27 January** for papers concerning Amphibians, Reptiles, Carnivores, Small Mammals, Landbirds, Seabirds, Marine Mammals, Threatened & Endangered Species, Forest Canopy Ecology, Managed Forests Systems, Marine Systems, Shrub-Steppe Ecology, Remnant Prairies, Urban Ecology, and even Invertebrate Ecology. See the SNVB website for abstract guidelines and more information about the annual meeting. A registration form is included on page 9 of this Murreletter.

Looking for Last-Minute Gifts?

What do you get for the muddy-boots biologist who already has every field guide imaginable? Well, the all new *Amphibians of the Pacific Northwest* book, of course. The book is published by Seattle Audubon Society, includes species accounts for several recently described species, and replaces the out-of-print *Amphibi*-

ans of Washington and Oregon. It will be available from the SNVB website soon, but if you can't wait, send a check or money order (\$20 + \$3 shipping for one copy) made out to SNVB. Mail to: Julie Grialou, SNVB Treasurer, 18304 Highway 20, Winthrop, WA 98862. Marc Hayes will also provide a favorable review of this book in the next Murreletter.



What's New with the 'Naturalist?

The *Northwestern Naturalist* is the official journal of the Society. It was originally published as the *Murrelet* and is recognized as the best source of early biological studies in the Pacific Northwest. The triannual journal publishes peer-reviewed original contributions dealing with biology of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and fishes in the western United States and Canada.

Statistics from Recent Volumes

Manuscript submission rates continue to fluctuate around 25 to 30 per year, but 2005 appears to be a year that will exceed the norm. One potential reason is our involvement in BioOne and JSTOR, which increases the likelihood that other researchers will find and use our papers. That, in turn, makes Northwestern Naturalist a more attractive venue for publication. There doesn't seem to be any trend regarding the proportion of submissions that are articles vs. general notes. Acceptance rates are complete for only two of the years in the following table, but appear to be fairly stable in the range of 70-80%. The total number of pages in each volume seems to be creeping up slowly, although part of the big jump in 2005 can be attributed to the large number of abstracts published from the annual meeting.

Electronic Submission Now Available

Manuscripts can be submitted to the journal either electronically as a Microsoft Word file or in hard copy. I encourage authors to use the electronic option if possible; it saves some time and lots of paper and postage. Hard copy submission will still be necessary, however, when figures such as maps, some graphs, and some photos are created with programs not readily available to the editors and potential reviewers.

Back Issue Sale

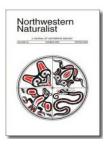
If SNVB has a current email address for you, then you should have received my direct message about the availability of back issues for \$30. The message produced a large response beyond that generated by the notice in the last *Murreletter*. In addition, the offer was posted on a herpetology electronic bulletin board, which brought additional orders for back issues. All-in-all, I have orders for more than 70 sets, which I plan to fill in December after the winter issue of the current volume is published. The cost to nonmembers was increased by \$25 to cover the cost of becoming members for 2006, so the process may generate some new and continuing members as well as reduce the storage problem and provide income.

New Editor Needed in Fall 2007

Although I'm officially retired, I'm continuing to maintain my office at Eastern Oregon University for about 3 more years. Once I leave and no longer have the logistic support that the University provides, I will need to give up the position as Editor of Northwestern Naturalist. The new editor should be in place by fall of 2007 to assume responsibility for the first issue of 2008. This is obviously <u>very</u> early notice, but the SNVB Board thought it appropriate to announce

it now so people who might be interested in the position can begin to think about it. More information will be forthcoming.

—Submitted by Burr Betts Editor, Northwestern Naturalist



Year	No. of Pages	Number of Submissions	Number of Articles	Number of Notes	Number Accepted	Number Rejected
2002	134	24	18 (75%)	6	19 (79%)	5
2003	154	31	16 (52%)	15	23 (74%)	8
2004	140	25	10 (40%)	15	12 (67%)*	6
2005	166	27*	19 (70%)*	8*	27 (100%)*	0*
* To	o date.					

Herp Conservation Groups Contributed to Riparian Management in 2005...

Herpetology group hosts workshops to improve understanding of northern California riparian areas

In the mid 1990s the interagency Forest Reptile & Amphibian Working Group (FRAWG) was established by the California Board of Forestry and the California Fish and Game Commission in response to a petition to list the southern torrent salamander, a headwater stream specialist, which the petition documented was being seriously impacted by timber harvest practices. The Forest Service herpetology research group in Arcata, led by Hartwell Welsh, was a founding member of FRAWG, and has been an active participant ever since. This past spring FRAWG hosted three workshops intended to bring land and resource managers, foresters, physical and biological scientists, and members of agencies regulating timber harvest together to facilitate a dialogue on key aquatic features affecting native reptiles and amphibians. These workshops were designed with three components. First, scientists working in forested landscapes presented their

"We left the workshop with a sense that most of the folks working in the woods want to be good stewards of the lands they manage. As research scientists we can provide land managers with the appropriate information to make informed decisions that protect these key aquatic resources."

understanding of physical and biological processes of aquatic features on forested landscapes. Topics included geology, hydrology, botany, invertebrates, and herpetofauna and speakers discussed the possible effects of land management activities on aquatic habitat and how forest practices might be used to maintain or improve habitat characteristics and functions for associated amphibian and reptile species. In the second part of the workshops, participants visited a number of field sites and talked about the characteristics and functions of these aquatic features. Attendees were asked to disregard current forest practice rules and design their own management prescription for each specific site. The third part of the workshops took the form of a facilitated discussion integrating the understanding of aquatic features with possible protection measures. The attendees' prescriptions for each site were discussed and evaluated. Commonalities among the disciplines were highlighted. One commonality among the groups was that most prescriptions called for more protection than required under current rules. The facilitated discussion encouraged an exchange of information to assist in preparation and review of timber harvesting plans and some useful, results-based techniques to protect aquatic forest resources in various situations.

The workshops occurred at three venues in northern California; Fort Bragg in Mendocino County, Korbel in Humboldt County, and Redding in Shasta County. Financial and human resources for the workshop were provided by the California Department of Fish & Game, California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection, U.S. Forest Service PSW Redwood Sciences Laboratory, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Green Diamond Resource Company, Campbell Timberland Management, Mendocino Redwood Company, W. M. Beaty & Associates, and The Wildlife Society: California North Coast & Sacramento/ Shasta Chapters.

The workshops were well-received by the participants. The presentations provided current understanding on the processes that form and maintain aquatic features on forest landscapes, and described the ecosystem services provided by these features. On the field site visits there was strong agreement on the need to preserve functions of aquatic features on the landscape, with most participants recommending prescriptions that were more protective than current state regulations require. We left the workshop with a sense that most of the folks working in the woods want to be good stewards of the lands they manage. As research scientists we can provide land managers with the appropriate information to make informed decisions that protect these key aquatic resources.

--Submitted by: Don Ashton and Hartwell Welsh, Southern Region Vice President



... And Plan for a Busy 2006

Don't Miss the Declining Amphibians Annual Meeting

The California/Nevada Chapter of the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force (DAPTF) is announcing its 2006 Annual Meeting, to be held in Arcata, California, 12-13 January 2006. In an attempt to help bridge the gap between research and policy, this year DAPTF has invited Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) to introduce their latest conservation efforts in the West. We will kick off with a keynote speech by J. Whitfield Gibbons, Professor of Ecology and Senior Research Scientist at University of Georgia Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, and an introduction to PARC, followed by a series of research talks. We're also planning a Thursday evening banquet and optional Saturday field trips. The meeting will be held at Humboldt State University and lodging is available nearby at a discounted rate. This is a high-powered meeting at a low-budget rate. The registration fee is very reasonable (\$15) and hotel rooms can be reserved for \$55 per night (North Coast Inn (707) 822-4861, mention DAPTF/HSU group rate). For more information contact the local planning committee: Don Ashton, USDA-FS Ecologist (707) 825-2984 or dashton@fs.fed.us. Or visit the conference website: http://ice.ucdavis.edu/CANVDecliningAmphibians/ Documents/DAPTF2006Announcement.htm

-Submitted by Don Ashton, USDA Forest Service

Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation: Reconvening the Northwest Regional Working Group

Members of the national partnership, Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) are working to reestablish a Northwest Regional Working Group (NWRWG). PARC is an inclusive coalition of Federal and State government, Academia, NGOs, and Industry (e.g., pet industry, forest products industry, etc.) dedicated toward the conservation of herpetofauna and their habitats. PARC also partners with existing conservation organizations such as the Declining Amphibians Population Task Force (DAPTF) and Pacific Northwest Amphibian and Reptile Consortium (PNARC) for project collaboration.

A meeting of the NWRWG is planned for mid-late 2006. At this time, we would like to open nominations for Northwest Regional Co-Chairs. PARC officers typically serve on a 2-year, staggered term, with a Senior and Junior Co-Chair framework. However, in this first year, one officer (the Senior Co-Chair) will be asked to serve a 3year term, while the supporting Junior Co-Chair will serve the standard 2-year term. Co-Chairs are primarily responsible for the following tasks:

- Organizing annual RWG meetings, sending out meeting minutes, and following up on action items

- Serving as a voting member on National PARC's Joint National Steering Committee (JNSC)

- Reporting RWG activities and project progress to National PARC's JNSC

- Attending and representing PARC at Regional herpetological and related conferences

For additional information about PARC, please visit **www.parcplace.org.** For those interested in participating in the planning workshop, or to submit officer nominations, please contact NW PARC interim Chair Dede Olson (dedeolson@fs.gov), PARC State Agencies Coordinator, Priya Nanjappa Mitchell (priya@parcplace.org), or PARC Federal Agencies Coordinator, Ernie Garcia (ernest_garcia@fws.gov).

-Submitted by Dede Olson, SNVB Past President

More Upcoming Events of Interest

25 January 2006. Salmon 2100 Project: Alternative Futures for Wild Pacific Salmon in Western North America, Portland, OR. Contact: lackey.robert@epa.gov or (541) 754-4607.

7-8 February 2006. Fisher and Marten in California: Moving Science and Management Forward. Sacramento, CA. www.tws-west.org

1-4 March 2006. Oregon Chapter American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, Sunriver, OR. www.orafs.org

4-7 April 2006. Applying DNA Methods to the Study of Wildlife Distribution and Abundance. Nelson, British Columbia, Canada, www.cmiae.org or (250) 837-9311. See website for other 2006 workshops on caribou and bear conservation.

27-28 April 2006. Conserving Birds in Human-Dominated Landscapes. American Museum of Natural History, New York City, http://cbc.amnh.org

Science vs. Politics in Columbia River Salmon

Editor's Note: The following article was printed in the Washington Post on 30 November 2005. It is reprinted here in its entirety as a chilling reminder of how politics can often trump science-based decision making.

Zeroing Out the Messenger, By Blaine Harden

PORTLAND, Ore. -- In a surgical strike from Capitol Hill, Sen. Larry E. Craig (R-Idaho) has eliminated a little-known agency that counts endangered fish in the Columbia River.

The Fish Passage Center, with just 12 employees and a budget of \$1.3 million, has been killed because it did not count fish in a way that suited Craig.

"Data cloaked in advocacy create confusion," Craig said on the Senate floor this month,

after successfully inserting language in an energy and water appropriations bill that bans all future funding for the Fish Passage Center. "False science leads people to false choices."

Here in Portland, Michele DeHart, a fish biologist who is the longtime manager of the center, said she is not mad at Craig.

"What's the point?" asked DeHart, 55, who for nearly 20 years has run the agency that keeps score on the survival of endangered salmon as they negotiate federal dams in the Columbia and Snake rivers.

"I have never met the man," she said. "Never talked to him. No one from his office ever contacted us. I guess I am flabbergasted. We are biologists and computer scientists, and what we do is just math. Math can't hurt you."

But the mathematics of protecting salmon swimming in the nation's largest hydroelectric system can hurt your pocketbook -- particularly in the Northwest, where dams supply power to four out of five homes, more than anywhere in the country.

Salmon math has clearly riled up Craig, who in his last election campaign in 2002 received more money from electric utilities than from any other industry and who has been named "legislator of the year" by the National Hydropower Association.

The Fish Passage Center has documented, in excruciating statistical detail, how the Columbia-Snake hydroelectric system kills salmon. Its analyses of fish survival data also suggest that one way to increase salmon survival is to spill more water over dams, rather than feed it through electrical turbines.

This suggestion, though, is anathema to utilities -- and to Craig --because water poured over dams means millions of dollars in lost electricity generation.

Last summer, a federal judge in Portland, using data and analysis from the Fish Passage Center, infuriated the utilities. He ordered that water be spilled over federal dams in the Snake River to increase salmon sur-

> vival. Shortly after Judge James A. Redden issued his order, Craig began pushing to cut all funding for the Fish Passage Center.

"Idaho's water should not be flushed away on experimental policies based on cloudy, inexact assumption," Craig said in a news release.

On the Senate floor this month, he justified elimination of the Fish Passage Center on the grounds that "many questions have arisen regarding the reliability of the technical data" it publishes. Craig quoted from the report of an independent scientific advisory board that in 2003 reviewed work done by the Fish Passage Center.

But one of the report's authors, Charles C. Coutant, a fishery ecologist who retired this year from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, said Craig neglected to mention that the board found the work of the center to be "of high technical quality."

"Craig was very selective in reflecting just the critical part of a quotation from the report," said Coutant, who has worked on Columbia River salmon issues for 16 years. "It did give a misleading impression about our board's view of the Fish Passage Center."

... Continued on page 8



Page 8

... Continued from page 7

Craig also said on the Senate floor that "other institutions" in the Northwest now do "most" of the data collection work done by center (sic). He said getting rid of the center would reduce redundancy and increase the efficiency of regional fish programs.

But according to another recent independent scientific assessment of the work of the center, there was little duplication of data collection between the center and other organizations; it recommended that the center continue to receive funding to meet a substantial need in the Northwest for information on salmon survival.

Fish and game agencies in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, Indian tribes with fishing rights on the river and the governors of Oregon and Washington have all said that eliminating the Fish Passage Center is a bad idea that would reduce the quality of information on endangered salmon.

"We are biologists and computer scientists, and what we do is just math. Math can't hurt you....I guess it is just that old cliché about killing the messenger".

Echoing a number of regional experts on salmon recovery, Jeffrey P. Koenings, director of the Washington Fish and Wildlife Department, said in a letter to the regional congressional delegation that it makes no economic sense to kill the center. "Eliminating or reducing funding for the Fish Passage Center will actually increase salmon recovery costs, as the states and tribes will need additional staff to replace the lost functions," he wrote.

Money for the center has come from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), a federal agency that sells power from federal dams. In 1980, Congress passed a law ordering that salmon in the Columbia hydro-system receive "equitable treatment," along with electricity generation, irrigation and barge transport. BPA was compelled to fund the Fish Passage Center in 1984 as part of the effort to ensure equitable treatment for fish.

Craig blocked this funding mechanism by inserting a sentence in an energy and water spending bill that says, "The Bonneville Power Administration may make no new obligations in support of the Fish Passage Center."

Here in Portland, DeHart said she did not want to specu-

late about Craig's motives. "I guess it is just that old cliché about killing the messenger," said DeHart, whose office will close in March.

Other prominent players in the region's decades-old salmon vs. power debate are less reticent.

Don Chapman, an Idaho fisheries biologist who has worked for regional utilities, state agencies and environmental groups, wrote Craig a letter accusing him of bad faith. "I state flatly that your attempt to dismantle the Fish Passage Center is wrongheaded and vindictive," he wrote.

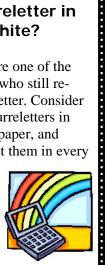
Asked about these charges, Craig's spokesman, Dan Whiting, responded by e-mail: "This is about improving the program, taking advocacy out of science and ensuring we have dams and salmon in the Northwest. It is not about vindictiveness or retribution by Sen. Craig -- that is not his style."



Seeing your Murreletter in Black and White?

If you answered yes, you're one of the roughly 15% of members who still receive hard copies of the 'letter. Consider switching to electronic Murreletters in 2006. They save postage, paper, and printing costs. Plus you get them in every

color of the rainbow. To sign up for electronic Murreletters contact Ian Reid. *This message created from 100% recycled electrons.*



Registration Form for the 2006 Joint Annual Meeting Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology – Washington Chapter of The Wildlife Society One Person Per Form Please, Form also available at http://www.snwvb.org/ E-mail:								
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Address:								
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and payment to: Julie Grialou, 18304 Highway 20, Winthrop, WA 98862. SNVB Tax Identification Number is 91-605-3399.

Cancellation Policy: We offer a full refund for cancellations through 27 January 2006. For cancellations after 27 January 2006, there will be a handling fee of 25% of the total bill. Substitutions are fine (i.e. if someone has a sick child, they can send a colleague in their place).

Registration Scholarships: A limited number of registration scholarships are available to students or others. Please contact: Aimee McIntyre (360) 902-2560 or e-mail: mcintam@dfw.wa.gov for more information.



Mark your calendars for the 2006 Annual Meeting:

Challenges of a Changing World: Historical Perspectives and New Innovations

27 March—1 April, Olympia, Washington Paper Abstracts Due 27 January