

The Murreletter

Society for Northwestern
Vertebrate Biology

Volume 13, No. 2

June 2005

President's Message

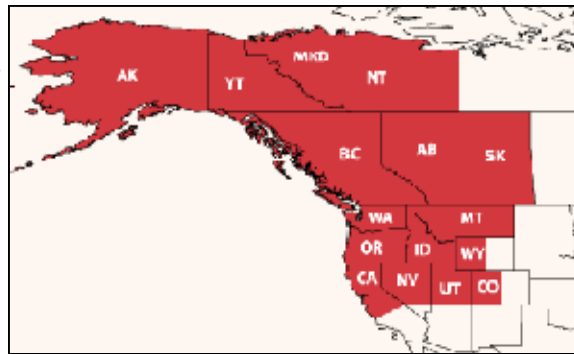
It is a strange and exciting thing to be writing a letter to you as a President. I've never been one before and it's new territory for me. Similarly, when congratulating me on becoming President, my supervisor said that he had never supervised a President before. It's a brave new world out there for some of us. He supposed that, as a first task, we should annex the portions of Wyoming, Colorado and California that were not already part of our "territory" (see inset). I've never annexed anything either so I am a little unsure of the approach. Perhaps it's just a GIS exercise. Lets hope that's the case cause I don't know if we have the treasury for an extended foray into the fringe, although a long hike would be nice and we could piggyback it with spring training. However, and just to be thorough, we should probably appoint an annexation committee. Eastern Wyoming could be tougher to tackle than initially projected and some have suggested that we may, totally, need to re-evaluate southern California.

I hope you got to attend the annual meeting in Corvallis. It was a great success by any measure, as you can see from the statistics on Page 7. I'd like to thank Dede Olson and the rest of the board and members for all their hard work at organizing and leading the meeting. Well done! Many thanks also to the Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society for their organization and leadership. The Oregon Chapter is a great bunch of folks and I hope we meet with them again soon.

Before shifting gears into other territory, I would like to congratulate our newly elected board members (see article on Page 3). They and the rest of the board are a

remarkable group of people and they reflect the qualities of a remarkable membership. I'd like to specifically recognize the outstanding contributions of Dede Olson, who just retired as SNVB President. She has set the bar very high, and that is how it should be.

Our members, our history, and our purpose have made SNVB an organization that has gathered and grown for 85 years. Besides the enjoyment we all get out of attending the meetings and working together, I see us as having an additional purpose. While we are not a political group, we build the science that makes wise choices much harder to ignore. We face extraordinary challenges in preventing extinctions. In light of the



failure to adopt the Kyoto Treaty, the likelihood of opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil exploration, the reduction in ESA protections for species at risk, and the relaxation of the rules for U.S. Forest Service roadless areas (to list a few recent issues), it's easy to conclude that environmental protection and endangered

species recovery are being undermined by the agencies mandated to provide those services. However, we've also seen how the overwhelming weight of good science changes things. We no longer talk about climate change like it's a possibility (with a few, very notable exceptions). We now talk about possible remedies, and that change happened over the last few years. Hopefully our efforts will continue to turn talk into action on many fronts.

We've already seen some action as we gear up for the 2006 annual meeting. We are looking at a 2006

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Society for Northwest 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 pre-eminent 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 Northwest 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.

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meeting in Olympia, Washington, and the Washington Chapter of The Wildlife Society will be joining us. Given our common ground, common membership and an intense passion for raffles, it makes sense to have a get together. We'll give you more info on the meeting as the pieces take shape. If you are interested in helping with the meeting, you are hereby officially invited to help. Although there may be some work involved, it can be fun building a successful meeting and there will be a good group of folks working with you. Contact Washington VP Marc Hayes (hayesmph@dfw.wa.gov) or me (lewisjcl@dfw.wa.gov) if you would like to get involved. I look forward to working with you and catching up in Olympia.

—Jeff

2005 Board Elections

The results of the 2005 Board elections are in! The positions open this year were: President, Washington Vice-President, Inland Vice-President, Secretary, and Trustees.

Some of the candidates are familiar to the society and some are new faces. Jeff Lewis from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has taken the reigns to serve as the society's president. Jeff has previously served as a trustee. Marc Hayes, currently a Trustee, moved into the Washington Vice-President position. Bryce Maxwell from the University of Montana joins us as the Inland Vice-President. Bryce is new to SNVB. Tara Chestnut, also a former Trustee, is the new Secretary. Aimee McIntyre and Hannah Anderson join us to fill the two trustee positions. Aimee joins us from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and is filling the three year term. Hannah joins us from the Washington Department of Natural Resources and The Evergreen State College to fill the remainder of Marc's term as he fills the vacant WA VP position. We also asked the membership to vote on a constitutional amendment to change the Treasurer term from two years to three years, which was approved. This amendment was created from suggestions from Julie Grialou, our current Treasurer.

Thanks to all who voted and those that ran. Welcome aboard new members!

—Submitted by Tara Chestnut, Secretary

Scholarship Results

We are pleased to announce the results of the first annual SNVB student scholarship. Eighteen applications were received. The applications were all strong and selection was difficult. We are very happy to announce the recipient, Miranda Cooley from Oregon State University. Miranda was awarded the scholarship for her undergraduate thesis investigating feather selection of Violet-Green and Tree Swallows for the purpose of lining their nests. The main objective of this project is to determine if swallows have a preference for the color of the feathers they choose, or if they merely use what is most readily available to them. Miranda will conduct experiments to test if light-hued or dark-hued feathers are preferred for nest-lining. A secondary objective is to determine if lining nests with feathers helps protect ectoparasites. Miranda will count the number of feathers in each nest and see if the quantity is correlated with the number of ectoparasites found. We look forward to hearing her results at a future meeting.



Thanks to the scholarship committee!

A hearty thank you to those that served on the scholarship committee: Tara Chestnut, Scholarship Chair, Washington Department of Transportation; Martin Raphael, USDA Forest Service Olympia Forestry Sciences Lab; Marc Hayes, John Pierce, and Mary Linders, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Make an in-VEST-ment in SNVB



Check out our new SNVB vests! They're fleece with an outer wind-proof nylon.



Available in red for women's sizes M and L. Available in olive green for men's sizes M, L, XL, and XXL. Cost is \$40, plus \$3.50 for shipping. Send check or money order, made out to SNVB, to Julie Grialou, 18304 Hwy 20, Winthrop, WA 98862.

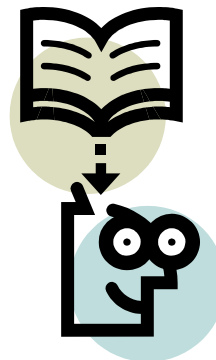
2004 SNVB Accomplishment Report

Compiled by Dede Olson, Past President

- We instituted a new Student Scholarship Program this year, providing one award annually for up to \$1,000 to provide travel, equipment and supplies for undergraduate or graduate student projects conducted on vertebrates within the geographic region of SNVB.
- Our journal, *Northwestern Naturalist*, became abstracted in BioOne, a searchable database of journals printed by Allen Press. This was a long journey for us, and thanks to the perseverance of our Editor, Burr Betts, it has finally become a reality.
- We raised annual dues, primarily to meet rising costs of journal publication, with individual rates being increased from \$20 to \$25 and student rates increased from \$12 to \$15. We are still the best deal in town!
- Our website went under construction, and we now showcase a new layout and design, pdf's of Murreletters, and several other features.
- We are improving our accounting practices, thanks to our Treasurer, and finished the year 2004 with about a zero balance of annual income minus costs. We have a healthy bank account to launch our Scholarship Program, but will need to strategize for annual meeting incomes to keep us in the black into the future.
- The Murreletter and Meeting Announcement/Call for Papers went to a primarily electronic distribution, which has huge reductions in printing and mailing costs. For those that really need a paper copy sent to them, we are complying with their requests.
- Our annual Election also has gone electronic, with Ballots available on the web-site for those members unable to attend the annual meeting.
- Our annual meeting in 2004 was in Ellensburg, Washington, at Central Washington University, held jointly with Northwestern Scientific Association, the Washington Chapter of The Wildlife Society, and Northwest Lichenologists.
- We are planning our annual meeting in 2006 for Olympia, Washington.

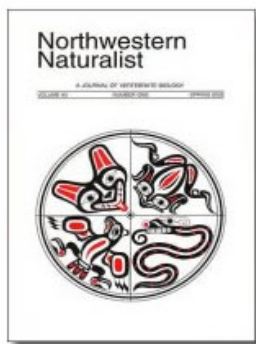
Journal Sets Available at Reduced Costs

Sets of back issues are available to SNVB members. About 160 issues of the *Murrelet* from volume 11 through volume 69 are available as are most issues of *Northwestern Naturalist* starting with volume 70. The cost for the sets is \$30 including shipping. Please contact Burr Betts with requests by **July 31, 2005**.



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 tri-annual journal publishes peer-reviewed original contributions dealing with biology of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and fishes in the western United States and Canada.



Northwestern Naturalist is going to be indexed in both the BioOne and JSTOR databases. Articles and notes in new issues (up to three years old) can be found and purchased by researchers through BioOne. The entire set of back issues currently is being digitized and will be available electronically through JSTOR at no cost to SNVB. The JSTOR database also has contracted with a library at a major research university to archive a hardcopy set of the journal. In the past, our attempts to persuade BIOSIS and Current Science to abstract *Northwestern Naturalist* have been unsuccessful, but I expect that the inclusion of the journal in BioOne and JSTOR will eventually open those doors to us.

Changes to editorial staff:

I'm pleased to announce that **Kristiina Ovaska** has agreed to serve as an Associate Editor for *Northwestern Naturalist*, replacing Mike Rochelle. I greatly appreciate Mike's work on the manuscripts he has handled. Like Mike, Kristiina will handle the reviews of most reptile papers and will help out on amphibian papers. **Clayton Apps** and **Eric Lofroth** will be sharing the duties of editing mammal papers that Jeff Lewis formerly had before Jeff resigned to become SNVB President. Both have expertise with a

variety of mammals and especially with carnivores.

I'm also pleased to announce that **Christopher Pearl** will take over the duties of Book Review Editor, replacing Kristiina as she moves into her new position.



This is a good time to once again thank all the Associate Editors for the journal. These are the folks who do most of the work in getting papers ready for publication. I greatly appreciate their help and commitment to their work. I especially want to thank **Janet Jones** who continues to do our final proof reading even though she and husband Larry have moved to Arizona.

On an experimental basis, *Northwestern Naturalist* is now accepting manuscripts electronically as well as in hard copy. Current submission guidelines are available on the SNVB website.



—Submitted by Burr Betts, Editor
Northwestern Naturalist

PowerPoint as a Tempting Tool by A.R. Weisbrod, Past-Washington Vice President

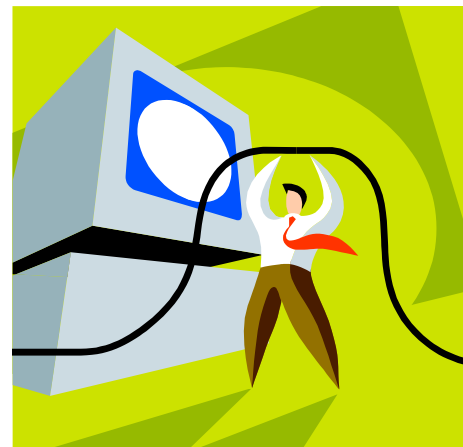
Editor's Note:

This article provides an alternate view to Marc Hayes' PowerPoint article in the Fall 2004 Murreletter

The excitement of new and successful electronic tools is difficult to contain at scholarly meetings throughout the world, particularly where it involves computer and digital technologies heretofore unimagined. In the Days of Yore, scientific conferences and meetings were occasions where scientists, their students and other scholars, gathered to exchange new information and discoveries... and sometimes drink beer. The exchange of information often took the form of oral presentations to interested colleagues for comment and consideration, as a prelude to publication, in which the research question, methods, results, and analysis were presented. Listeners responded to each presentation with questions, suggestions, and comments. Recently, with the advent of PowerPoint and other digital integrative media software, both presenters and listeners at research conference paper sessions have become enthralled by the digital drama of contrasting images, patterned graphs, vivid colors, and data promotion. PowerPoint, if I recall correctly, was developed as a corporate marketing tool to promote products in a glittering multi-media format to prospective purchasing departments, corporate boards, and time-share condo buyers. The software is designed to foster approbation, not raise questions. Scientists, and other scholars, were quick to see the possibilities of digital presentation software to actually display their studies in a persuasive manner to colleagues at scholarly meetings, or even to government proposal reviewers. The great temptation of this software is to avoid focus on study design, methods, results, or even analysis; one simply presents well packaged points in kaleidoscopic color and gorgeous graphics that can easily mask the weaker elements. It is the presentation itself that conveys credibility and truth. Thus, successful marketing of research results becomes a virtual verification of veracity. The media has indeed become the message.

These electronic presentations have become so entertaining that some have proposed offering bags of popcorn at the entrance to conference lecture halls. Soon, I suspect, scholarly societies will present coveted golden statues for the best digital presentation.

I propose two possible solutions to the seductions of Power Point: 1} Always include PowerPoint-less sessions at every annual meeting; and/or 2} require two chairs for each PowerPoint session, one to moderate, the other to question. Both should read and review each paper to be presented prior to the session, much like reviewers for publication. In a session finale, the Questioner, supported by the Moderator, asks questions of each author about study design, methods, results, or analysis as appropriate, and leads the listeners in a general discussion. If done properly, such a session finale will aid the authors in further refinement of their studies for publication. Presentation of research results at scientific meetings should not be an end in itself—as is implicit in PowerPoint—but rather as a step moving research towards publication. Our annual meetings should consistently foster the publication of research as the primary goal of all presentations.



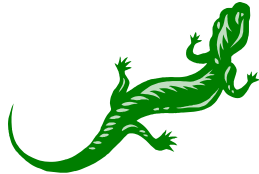
New salamander species described

Five researchers recently published a paper in *Herpetologica* that used genetic and morphological data to describe a new salamander species, the Scott Bar salamander (*Plethodon asupak*).

The word "asupak" is the Shasta Indian name for Scott Bar, an area near the confluence of the Scott and Klamath rivers in northern California.

Multivariate analyses showed the Scott Bar salamander is distinct from the closely related Siskiyou Mountains and Del Norte salamanders. The Scott Bar salamander may have the most limited distribution of any plethodontid.

The citation is: Mead, L. S., D. R. Clayton, R. S. Nauman, D. H. Olson, and M. E. Pfreder. 2005. Newly discovered populations of salamanders from Siskiyou County California represent a species distinct from *Plethodon stormi*. *Herpetologica* 61:158-177.



2005 Annual Meeting results

375 attendees
 +134 speakers (30 workshop, 3 plenary, 1 banquet, 100 paper presenters)
 + 32 posters
 + >3 kegs of beer (who's counting?!)

= 1 excellent time

At their annual meeting, Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society presents several best paper awards. We congratulate the recipients from our joint 2005 meeting: Best Overall Paper (Dimick Award): Mark Huff (US Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, OR); Best Student Papers (Les Eberhardt Award): Stephanie Wessell (Oregon State University) and Denim Jochimsen (Idaho State University); Best Graduate Student Poster: John Romansic (Oregon State University); Best Undergraduate Student Poster: Kristen Hiatt (Oregon Institute of Technology).

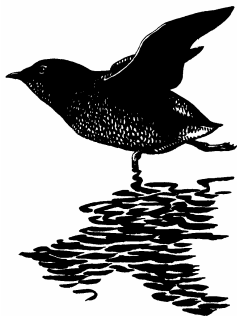
Annual meeting field trip summary

Doug DeGross led an amphibian hunting party of 20 from Northern California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho through the Oregon Coast Range. Conditions were quite fine for February (moist and above freezing!) and they found: *Ascaphus truei*, *Rhyacotriton variegatus*, *Dicamptodon tenebrosus*, *Plethodon vehiculum*, *Aneides ferreus*, *Ensatina eschscholtzii*, *Taricha granulosa*, *Ambystoma gracile* and *Rana aurora*. Alas, the elusive Mary's Peak salamander (dark form of *Plethodon dummi*) was in hiding that day. A challenge to next year, can you top 9 species in a half-day?

Thanks to Dick Johnson

Because of Dick Johnson's dedication to the Society, the extra copies of *The Murrelet* and *Northwestern Naturalist* have had a home for the last 25 years. When Dick became Editor of *The Murrelet* in 1976, the stock of back issues came with the job. Even though he turned the editorship over to Dennis Martin in 1980, he has continued to accept and store the extra issues of the journal and has willingly continued to send missing copies to subscribers. But there are more than 200 extra copies of many issues and they are taking up much needed spaces in the Conner Museum of Natural History at Washington State University. Both to significantly reduce the journal storage space at WSU and to get the journal more readily into the hands of researchers and naturalists, we are offering libraries that currently subscribe to the journal the opportunity to purchase, at a very reasonable rate, the back issues necessary to fill out their collections. A side benefit will be the addition of some funds to our bank account!

For more details check out the article on page 4 of this Murreletter!



For more information about the
Society for Northwest Vertebrate Biology

Check out our updated web page:

<http://www.snwvb.org>

Upcoming Events:

Sept. 29-Oct. 1: Coastal cutthroat trout symposium, Fort Worden, WA;
www.orafs.org/cutthroat.html

Oct. 5-7: PNW chapter of Society of Wetland Scientists annual meeting,
Vancouver, WA; <http://pnw.sws.org>