



The Murreletter

Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology

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President's Message

For the last two years, the SNVB board has been engaged in strategic planning efforts for our organization. The first step in these efforts was to create statements of purpose, e.g. our mission, vision and values. We brought the first draft to you this time last year by way of the Murreletter and began soliciting your comments. Several iterations have been reviewed, edited and re-edited and I am pleased to present you with the final version approved by the membership and board.

Mission Statement: SNVB promotes continued improvement of the understanding of natural history and ecology of vertebrates in northwestern North America

SNVB advances this mission by:
providing a venue or forum for topical issues at conferences and through publications, and promoting educational opportunities and supporting the development of student research

Vision Statement: As the pre-eminent society of vertebrate biologists in northwestern North America, SNVB will: inform an active and engaged membership, improve access to and disseminate the most current and credible scientific information, promote the expansion of our membership to include a large and diverse group of individuals representative of our community at large

SNVB advances this vision by:
establishing and enhancing networks of communication among biologists with common interests to foster science advances and collaboration across northwestern North America

Values Statement: SNVB members value the passion and fun in learning about our natural world, the scientific method, open communication, sharing information, and last but not least, dynamic and committed membership dedicated to achieving our mission.

Very gracious thanks are extended to our members that provided comments on our early versions: Reginald Barrett, Burr Betts, Steve Corn, Cathy Flick, Marc Hayes, Dede Olson, and John Pierce. John Alexander and Jaime Stephens of the Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO) provided especially helpful guidance and insights based on their prior strategic planning experiences at KBO. Our next step is to identify our goals and develop an action plan, which will help guide our actions and establish our priorities. We encourage your participation at all levels of planning and implementation, and value your time. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to help with SNVB's strategic planning efforts.

-Tara

Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology

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

-established 7 January 1920

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Who we are...

The Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology was founded on 7 January 1920 as the Pacific Northwest Bird and Mammal Club. 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 SNVB meetings, the right to vote in SNVB meetings and elections, and participation as a member of the SNVB board.

**For more information or to
become a member visit:
www.snwvb.org**

The Murreletter

The Murreletter is published three times yearly and is distributed to the members of the Society of 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 the Murreletter Editor, Eric Lund. To receive the Murreletter Electronically, which is strongly encouraged, please provide your current address to the SNVB Treasurer, Tiffany Garcia.

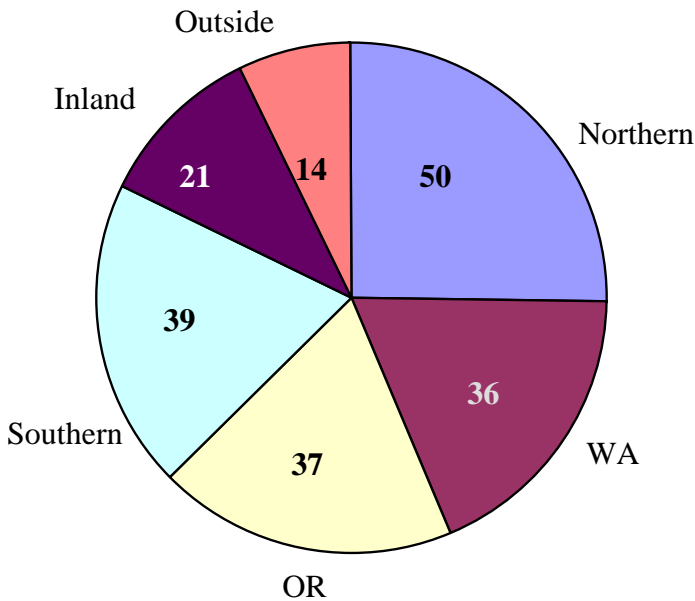
Where We Are

New Map Illustrates the Geographic Scope of the Society

Kelly Christiansen (U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station) designed this new image to detail the overall scope of the Society and its publications. Look for the map to grace the home page of the website (www.snwvb.org) soon!

Membership

Currently SNVB has 426 members. The distribution of membership by region are as follows: Washington (118), Northern (95), Oregon (84), Southern (45), Inland (34). In addition 42 members reside outside of these regions, including 1 outside of North America.



Authorship

A recent query of the Northwest Naturalist revealed that 197 authors have published articles since 2005. The figure at left indicates where these authors resided at the time of publication. (Data courtesy of Bob Hoffman, editor, Northwestern Naturalist).



You Too Can Submit Articles!

If you have an idea for an article, a seminar, workshop, or training announcement, or would like to advertise a job or student announcement, please submit to the Murreletter. The Murreletter is published three times per year (March/April, July/August, November/December) and Reaches the entire SNVB membership. Please send articles To Eric Lund at: snvb.murreletter@gmail.com

ANNOUNCING THE 2009 CONFERENCE - a joint meeting of The Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology and the Washington Chapter of the Wildlife Society

February 18 – 21, 2008
Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, WA



Temporal Issues in Ecological Science: Implications for Research, Management, and Conservation in the Pacific Northwest

February 18: Pre-meeting Symposia:

- 1) Stream-associated Amphibians and West-side Forest Management in the Pacific Northwest
- 2) Lessons and Insights on Long-term Ecological Research in the Pacific Northwest
- 3) Habitat Connectivity Planning Symposium

February 19 – 20: Plenary and Regular Meeting

February 21: Field trips TBA

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS:

The planning committee is currently recruiting volunteers for meeting planning. Volunteer to help coordinate meeting logistics, session topics, fundraising, and more. Meeting planning is a volunteer effort and cannot be done without the help of many hands. Estimated time commitment is an average of 4 hours per month. Contact Aimee McIntyre with your interest in volunteering (mcintam@dfw.wa.gov).



The Nature Conservancy Monitors Amphibian Populations in Thurston County, Washington.

In an effort led by The Nature Conservancy's Carri Marschner, Conservancy staff and volunteers have been monitoring for amphibians along the middle reach of the Black River in Thurston County this spring. The goal of the surveys is to ascertain what species dwell in the riparian areas along South Puget Sound prairie boundaries. Everyone is hoping that the waters might be home to the Oregon Spotted Frog, *Rana pretiosa*, a candidate for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act, but the live traps have not yielded any yet. The Oregon Spotted Frog does occur upstream in the Black, generally above the town of Littlerock. The three sites monitored this spring are Shotwell's Landing and Mima Creek, both units of The Conservancy's Black River Preserve, and Thurston County's Glacial Heritage Preserve. All three sites are south of Littlerock, WA.

Thus far, the staff has observed two species of frog; Red-legged, *Rana aurora*, and Pacific tree frog, *Pseudacris pacifica*; two species of salamanders; Northwestern salamander, *Ambystoma gracile* and Long-toed salamander, *Ambystoma macrodactylum*; and Rough-skinned newts, *Taricha granulosa*.



Ambystoma gracile, Mima Creek Property
Photoby Colleen O'Shea

Other exciting (but non-amphibian) species found so far are the Olympic Mud minnow, *Novumbra hubbsi* and a Pacific lamprey, *Lampetra tridentata*. The Olympic Mud minnow is a species endemic to Washington State and is designated as a sensitive species. The Pacific lamprey is also of conservation interest due to its declining population numbers.

-Article and photo submitted by Colleen O'Shea, Americorps volunteer.

Member Photo



This photograph of a Pygmy Rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*) at its burrow was taken on 1 March 2007 near Grasshopper Creek, about 18 km NW of Bannack, Beaverhead County, Montana. The rabbit ran down into its burrow, but reemerged shortly, and I was able to take this image. Pygmy Rabbits are a Montana Species of Concern because they require sagebrush for food and shelter and are found only in the southwestern corner of the state. Besides being very cute, they are the only rabbits that excavate their own burrows. At this particular location we located 13 burrow systems represented by 45 openings over a 1 km linear distance.

Photo and caption by Paul Hendricks, Montana Natural Heritage Program, Missoula, MT.



Course Announcement – Design and Analysis of Mark-Recapture Studies

October 7-8, Repeated October 21-23, 2008

Coast Hillcrest Hotel, Revelstoke, British Columbia

Instructor: Dr. Carl Schwarz, Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science, Simon Fraser University (<http://www.stat.sfu.ca/~cschwarz/>).

Class Size: Class size is limited to 16 people

Cost: \$650: Fee includes Instruction, pre-course reading (to be downloaded from Dr. Schwarz's website), and coffee breaks. Participants are responsible for their own meals and accommodations.

Bring: Laptop computer pre-loaded with software, pre-reading material.

This course will examine common mark-recapture methods. While the focus will be on methods commonly used in fisheries management, the methodology presented is suitable for many other situations as well (i.e. "statistics is statistics"). The course will consist of theory and worked examples, using mostly MARK. Aspects of study design, the analysis of final results, and an overview of methods coming in the future will be presented. There will be an opportunity for participants to work through their own projects.

Details and registration are at www.cmiae.org

Questions? Call the Columbia Mountains Institute office at 250-837-9311

Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies – What's New

Since the last issue of the Murreletter (April 2008), the Biodiversity Center for Wildlife Studies, a non-profit society in British Columbia, has made some significant changes to its web page.



The following articles (PDF) and information are now available on-line at www.wildlifebc.org:

- All *Feature Articles* and *Notes* (115) for the first eight issues of the peer-reviewed, bi-annual journal
- *Wildlife Afield* (includes amphibians, reptiles, bird, mammals, and conservation issues)
- Fully updated species accounts for British Columbia published as *Feature Species* in *Wildlife Afield* (e.g. Wood Frog, Turkey Vulture, Semipalmated Plover) can be ordered
- The long-awaited BCFWS article *Making a Wildlife Data Centre Work - History, Objectives, and Solutions for Sharing Data*
- An updated British Columbia Nest Record Scheme manual with samples of a single visit and colony card
- A copy of the Wildlife Data Centre brochure
- The *Table of Contents* for the recent issue of *Wildlife Afield* (Vol 4, No. 2)
- A power point presentation summarizing use of BCFWS databases in a paper *Avian Response to Climate Change in British Columbia, Canada – Towards a General Model* presented at the recent conference *Climate Change and Biodiversity in the Americas* in Panama
- Information on how to order The *British Columbia Nest Record Scheme – 53rd Annual Report – 2007*



YEAR 2009
of SCIENCE
Explore. Empower. Engage...

The **Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science** (COPUS) is a grassroots effort whose goal is to engage sectors of the public in science to increase their understanding of the nature of science and its value to society. A key objective of COPUS is to create new forums for communication and to develop new opportunities for engaging the public with science.

We invite your organization to join this coalition and to work with others in your community to engage the general public in dynamic ways that will make science more accessible, personally meaningful, and locally relevant.

Highlights from the June Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science Newsletter, the COPUS Clarion are available online (<http://copusproject.org/resources/COPUS-Clarion-2008-06.pdf>).

SAVE THE FROGS!™

A Nonprofit Organization Dedicated to Amphibian Conservation

“Save the Frogs! is an international team of scientists, educators, policymakers and naturalists dedicated to protecting the world’s amphibian species. We conduct and fund scientific research that directly benefits amphibian populations. We also engage in educational activities aimed at increasing the public’s awareness of environmental issues to ensure that amphibian conservation becomes – and remains – a top priority for current and future generations.”

-from www.savethefrogs.com



Previous issues of the Murreletter
are archived in .pdf format
on our website

www.snwvb.org/murreletter.html

*** SAVE THE DATE ***
**2009 Annual Meeting of
 NW PARC**
17 February 2009
Oregon Zoo, Portland



Charlie Crisafulli

Pacific treefrog (*Pseudacris regilla*), atypical blue color morph -
 A genetic variation whereby an individual cannot make yellow
 oil droplets in the chromatophores that typically combine with refractory
 blue guanine crystals to make the green color most commonly observed.

Northwest Working Group of Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) will hold its 2nd annual meeting at the Oregon Zoo on February 17, 2009. All are welcome to come brainstorm regional needs and issues, create new task teams, or join existing task teams (Inventory and Monitoring, Training, Funding, and Web Site) to advance regional herp conservation. For more information, contact Co-Chairs Elke Wind (ewind@telus.net) and Dede Olson (dedeolson@fs.fed.us).



U.S. Forest Service

Pacific Northwest Research Station ■ Rocky Mountain Research Station

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Reliance on unverifiable observations hinders successful conservation of rare, elusive wildlife species

PORTLAND, Ore. and FORT COLLINS, Colo. June 23, 2008. Nearly any evidence of the occurrence of a rare or elusive wildlife species has the tendency to generate a stir. Case in point: in February 2008, remote cameras unexpectedly captured the images of a wolverine in the central Sierra Nevada, an area from which the species was believed to be extinct since 1922. But frustratingly few observations prove to be so conclusive. So what, then, are managers to make of unverifiable observations, especially those that are not diagnostic?

Researchers from the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain Research Stations examined three cases of biological misunderstandings in which unverifiable, anecdotal observations were accepted as empirical evidence. Ultimately, they found that this acceptance adversely affected conservation goals for the fisher in the Pacific states, the wolverine in California, and the ivory-billed woodpecker in the southeast by vastly overestimating their range and abundance. The researchers' findings appear in the current issue of the journal *BioScience*.

Article citation: McKelvey, Kevin S.; Aubry, Keith B.; and Schwartz, Michael K. (2008). Using anecdotal occurrence data for rare or elusive species: the illusion of reality and a call for evidentiary standards. *BioScience*. 58(6): 549-555. The article is available online at <http://www.bioone.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1641%2FB580611>



For more information about the

Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology

check out our website:

www.snwvb.org