



The Magpie

The Wildlife Society / Sacramento-Shasta Chapter



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From the Editor

Sara Lee

It's autumn! Personally, my favorite time of year. Change is inevitable, and sometimes it is for the better! We've got a few changes for the Chapter. We are looking to modifying our Bylaws to facilitate a more efficient and effective Executive Board structure. This will affect the way we hold elections, a mechanism of change itself! Read on for more detail.

As always, The Magpie is available on the Chapter website: www.tws-west.org/sac-shasta/. If you know someone who did not receive an email announcing this issue, please refer that person to the website or have him/her contact me: slee@esassoc.com.

CHAPTER NEWS

Treasurer's Report

Kirsten Christopherson

As of October 3, 2005, the Chapter balance was \$19,711.76. The total income for calendar year 2005 so far is \$6,373.43. Income was generated mainly due to workshop revenue (Tracking Workshop in April, Springs/Seeps in June, and Aspen in July) and membership dues. The total expenses for calendar year 2005 are \$4,070.69 for workshop preparation, social activities, mailbox rental, and office supplies.

Chapter Elections

The Sac-Shasta Chapter board is currently reviewing the Bylaws and will propose changes to the Bylaws with regard to election procedures so that our membership in the most efficient way possible. Around this time we would normally hold election, however in light of the eminent change in the Bylaws elections will be postponed to a later date. If you are interested in running for a position, please do! Contact any one of the board members.

Chapter Meetings

Executive members of the Board met at Granzella's Restaurant in Williams on October 4, 2005 to discuss Chapter business and events. Meetings are generally held once every other month and are open to all Chapter members.



October 4th Meeting: From left to right: Mike Grifantini, Kirsten Christopherson, Linda Leeman, Melinda Dorin, Sara Lee, and Brett Furnas.

The Next Chapter Meeting is:

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7th, 2005

1:00 PM

@ Granzella's in Williams

It would be nice to see some new faces. ☺ Carpooling may be an option so if you are interested please contact Sara (slee@esassoc.com) and hopefully we can work something out.

Website Updates

We continue to post job and workshop announcements periodically, so be sure to visit our website: www.tws-west.org/sac-shasta. If you have suggestions or would

like to post an announcement, please contact **Melinda Dorin** (MDorin@energy.state.ca.us).

Western Section Report

Melinda Dorin

The next Western Section Board Meeting is November 4 in Sacramento. I will be attending so please let me know if there is something you would like me to bring up with the Board mdorin@energy.state.ca.us. The Section is already in the middle of planning the Annual Meeting next year in Sacramento. The Sacramento Shasta Chapter is co-sponsoring the field trips on Saturday and once some details are ironed out we will post information to our website. We are not taking early sign ups for the field trips but sign up sheets will be available at the sign in table at the Annual Meeting.

Sacramento-Shasta Chapter TWS Scholarship Update

Announcements have been sent out to all of the colleges served by the Sacramento-Shasta Chapter regarding our new scholarship and conference grant program. The funds for this program come from the proceeds from workshops and conferences that the chapter has coordinated during the past several years.

There could be several scholarships issued each year, as well as several conference/workshop grants. The scholarships will be for \$500-1,000 per year, for students in wildlife biology at one of the colleges in our area. Students attending community colleges, undergraduates at 4-year colleges, and graduate students are all eligible. The workshop/conference grants will be for students wishing to attend or present research at a conference.

The deadline for application submittal is **December 1**, so please help get the word out about these great opportunities for the new generation of wildlife biologists!

Aspen and Meadow Workshop May Lead to Rule Changes

Brett Furnas

The Sac-Shasta Chapter, in collaboration with the Northern California Society of American Foresters, held a workshop on aspen and meadow restoration on July 26, 2005. The event was well attended by 42 individuals representing 15 organizations including State and federal agencies as well as private land managers

and other interested parties. One person came from as far away as Utah. In addition, students from UC Berkeley and the University of Nevada at Reno attended.

During the workshop, which was held entirely in the field, a suggestion was made on how to streamline the California Forest Practice Rules in order to make it easier for private land owners to undertake aspen restoration projects. Currently, aspen trees are not counted towards post-harvest stocking requirements, leading to difficulties when the removal of numerous, competing, small and mid-sized conifers is proposed in timber harvest plans. There was general consensus among workshop participants in regard to the issue. As a result of discussions during the workshop, the Northern California Society of American Foresters is planning to petition the State Board of Forestry to modify the rules such that projects aimed at restoring and regenerating rare aspen stands within California's forest ecosystems may be exempted from conifer stocking requirements.

The Chapter is considering writing a letter of support for the change. However, before doing so, we would like to canvass the Chapter membership for their opinions on this action. We plan to send out an email soliciting feedback after the proposed petition language is finalized. In the meantime, any comments or questions can be addressed to **Brett Furnas** at (530) 225-3221 or bfurnas@dfg.ca.gov.



Wildlife Biologist Tom Rickman of the Lassen National Forest explains the recent aspen restoration project shown behind him.

UPCOMING EVENTS, INFORMATION SOURCES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wildlife Certification Workshop

The **Sac-Shasta Chapter, Western Section** and **EDAW** are co-hosting a **Wildlife Certification Workshop** in Sacramento on **Sunday November 6** at EDAW, Inc. 2022 J Street, Sacramento.

Professional Certification is strongly recommended by The Wildlife Society, as an indication of an individual's university and continuing education, and their professional experience. There are two levels, Certified Wildlife Biologist (generally at least a BS degree and five years actual experience as a professional biologist) and Associate Wildlife Biologist (degree, but less experience). Current students are welcome, it's a great asset to understand the certification requirements while still in school; you can plan future coursework that will fulfill certification requirements. Certification is looked upon favorably by employers, regulatory agencies and outsiders to our profession. This workshop will provide you with the tools and knowledge needed to start the process -no guarantee of certification can be provided. This will be the last Certification Workshop offered by TWS-West in the Sacramento area before the new Plant Taxonomy requirement takes effect in 2006!

For registration information check out the Chapter's or the Section's website.

West Nile News

Recently there has been a lot of concern over West Nile Virus infecting local bird populations. **Holly Ernest** is a Sac-Shasta Chapter Member studying the effects of West Nile virus on yellow-billed magpie populations. The following article written by Sylvia Wright is a reprint with permission from the [UC Davis News Service](#).

Magpie Deaths Worry West Nile Virus Researchers

August 26, 2005



Yellow-billed magpies are found only in California. (Richard Hall/UC Davis photo)

UC Davis researchers studying the effects of West Nile virus on wild bird populations report an alarming number of deaths among the Central Valley's signature bird, the yellow-billed magpie.

Their concerns led them to ask the California Department of Fish and Game, which has the job of conserving the state's wild birds, to assemble a special group of scientists as soon as possible.

"We are concerned that mortalities due to this epidemic may endanger the existence of the species," wrote Walter Boyce, a veterinarian and expert in wildlife health, and Holly Ernest, a veterinarian and expert in wildlife populations and genetics.

Yellow-billed magpies are found only in California. They are large, black-and-white birds with long tails and loud, squawking voices. Until this summer they had been common in Central Valley neighborhoods and farm fields.

Ernest and Boyce have a number of studies under way to assess the effects of West Nile virus on magpies and their close relatives, jays and crows. In one study, Boyce's research team at the UC Davis Wildlife Health Center has attached small, "backpack" radio transmitters to more than 40 birds to track their movements and to alert the scientists if the bird dies, so that tissue samples can be collected quickly.

In another study, Ernest's team at the UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory is examining whether West Nile virus has caused a loss in genetic diversity in

magpie populations. Such a loss could make the species less able to cope with environmental changes, including diseases. The team developed molecular tools specific for yellow-billed magpies and is comparing magpie DNA collected before West Nile virus entered California with samples collected recently. Similarly, the researchers have developed molecular DNA tools to examine whether the virus is changing the population structure of crows, Swainson's hawks and red-tailed hawks statewide.

Ernest also has established a corps of "citizen biologists" who count magpies, jays and crows on their commutes to work, or as they exercise on walks, runs and bike rides. More volunteers are needed throughout Central California. Information:

http://www.vgl.ucdavis.edu/wildlife/projects_BBB.html,
or e-mail Ernest at wildlife@vgl.ucdavis.edu.

Additional information:

[How to volunteer](#)

Media contact(s):

- Walter Boyce, Wildlife Health Center, (530) 752-4167, wmboyce@ucdavis.edu
- Holly Ernest, Veterinary Genetics Laboratory, (530) 754-8245, hbernest@ucdavis.edu
- Sylvia Wright, UC Davis News Service, (530) 752-7704, swright@ucdavis.edu

For more information
Email: wildlife@vgl.ucdavis.edu
http://www.vgl.ucdavis.edu/wildlife/projects_BBB.html

**Northern California Vernal Pool Conference
March 23-24, 2006 in Chico**

Butte Environmental Council presents "The Vernal Pool Complex of the Northstate: Biology, Conservation, and Management Conference."

Butte Environmental Council is hosting a conference and tours on March 23 and 24, 2006. The conference will be held at the **Sierra Nevada Brewery**, 1075 E. 20th Street in Chico. There will be presentations by eminent scholars and agency representatives concerning plant and animal species dependent on the vernal pool

ecosystem, conservation efforts and needs, and what management techniques have been used to enhance the viability of certain sites.

The tours on March 24 are still evolving. More information and details will follow in the next few months.

Butte Environmental Council
116 W. Second Street, Suite 3
Chico, CA 95928
(530) 891-6424

**Fisher and Marten:
Moving Science and Management Forward**

**February 7 & 8, 2006
Doubletree Hotel, Sacramento**

Preceding the Western Section Annual Conference, this symposium will present new scientific information on the fisher and marten and will explore management needs of these species in California.

Goals:

Provide updates on the science and conservation status of fisher and marten in California.

Provide a forum for land managers and regulators to discuss with researchers the information needs and possible approaches for fisher conservation on private and public lands in California.

Identify and describe specific parts of comprehensive state-wide conservation strategies for fisher and marten in California.

The format will be one full day of invited presentations by researchers on new or updated scientific information and a half-day of discussions of management-oriented issues. Registration materials and additional information will be available at the Western Section website (www.tws-west.org) by late summer or early fall.

California Anostracan and Notostracan Identification Class

(How to Identify Fairy Shrimps and Tadpole Shrimps)

This course is taught by Mary Belk who has studied these special invertebrates for years. She carries on the work of her late husband, freshwater invertebrate expert, Denton Belk, who literally wrote the book on fairy shrimp.

Description:

The 3-day course includes a lecture on fairy shrimp biology and ecology on the first day, and 2 days of lab study with preserved specimens from Mary's own collection. On the 3rd day students may take a practical examination using a key. A letter of participation in the course citing the results of the practical examination will be sent to each student by Mary Belk after class completion. The letter plus the test sheet will be faxed to the Carlsbad Office of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Many students have gone on to earn a FWS Recovery Permit after taking Mary's class.

Dates and Locations:

December 19-21, 2005; 8:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.
@ UC Davis, Briggs Hall, Room 122

Registration:

The cost of the course is \$595 per person (payment required in advance). Checks should be made payable to Mary Schug Belk and mailed to the address below. Mary's taxpayer identification number is 457783876.

To register and for a list of materials to bring to class, contact:

Mary Schug Belk
222 King William Apt. 1
San Antonio, TX 78204

Phone: 210-224-7743
Cell phone: 210-842-7734
Fax: 210-222-0360
E-mail: dbelk@texas.net
<http://dbelk.home.texas.net/>

Employment Opportunities...

Keep checking the website for jobs and volunteer positions!

<http://www.tws-west.org/sac-shasta/getajob.htm>

The Sacramento-Shasta Chapter welcomes comments and input from our members. If you have suggestions for articles or things you'd like to see, please let us know! Contact any one of the board members.

**The Sacramento-Shasta Chapter of The Wildlife Society,
1008 10th Street, PMB 245, Sacramento, CA 95814**

President- Brett Furnas (bfurnas@dfg.ca.gov)

President-Elect- VACANT

Secretary- Natalie Cull-Rodrigues (Natalie@avminstrument.com)

Treasurer-Kirsten Christopherson (norska1@earthlink.net)

Chapter Representative- Melinda Dorin (mdorin@energy.ca.gov)

Past-President- Mike Grifantini (grifantini@digital-star.com)

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