



# Passport

The Newsletter of the International Wildlife Management Working Group of The Wildlife Society

Volume V, Issue I

March 2017

## Inside this issue:



Courtesy K. Peiz Serrano

Fellowship benefits wildlife and future leaders Page 2



Photo by Melissa Merrick

IWMWG meeting highlights include guest presenter from Mexico Page 3

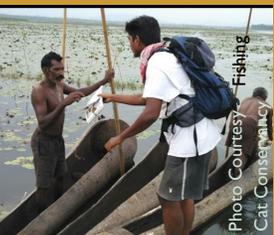


Photo Courtesy: Fishing Cat Conservancy

IWMWG grant encourages and inspires young wildlife professional from India Page 4



Photo courtesy M. Awais

IWMWG member from Pakistan reviews benefits of TWS conference Page 5

## Message from the Chair

Greetings everyone!

It's my privilege to succeed Robin White as chair of the IWMWG. Robin's leadership and the continued support from over 100 members means the group is in great shape to address its role within the Society. Working group participation is a great way to serve TWS and advance your own knowledge and service on issues you care about. Elections for IWMWG board positions are in April, so please think about running.

As you can see from this edition of The Passport, our members continue to represent a vital element of international diversity within The Wildlife Society. Our annual meeting at the 2016 TWS Annual Conference included updates and presentations from this year's IWMWG Travel Grant winners from India and Mexico. Santosh Edupuganti's wonderful report on these pages illustrates how valuable these grants can be. All IWMWG members who have senior authorship on an accepted paper at TWS Annual Conference are eligible to apply for \$500 (domestic) or \$750 (international) travel awards.

Looking ahead to the 2017 TWS Annual Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the IWMWG board has already been busy preparing. In collaboration with University of Arizona professor Dave Christianson, we have submitted a proposal to co-host and sponsor a symposium on borderlands wildlife. Several of our invited speakers south of the US/Mexico border have indicated need for travel funds, so if any IWMWG members know of appropriate funding sources, please contact us to help make this a great, internationally relevant event.

Also at the Annual Conference, we will host a booth at the exhibitors' hall (<http://www.twsconference.org/2017-conference-exhibitors/>), so please stop by to meet and contribute international thoughts and ideas with other IWMWG members. I'll get the ball rolling here by asking you to think about and contribute ideas for the 6<sup>th</sup> International Wildlife Management Congress. The IWMC location and dates have not been decided, but many of you will know how clearly our Japanese colleagues demonstrated the value of this event through the exceptional 5<sup>th</sup> IWMC in Sapporo (>1,200 participants from 47 countries). The IWMWG board is fully committed to helping TWS ensure the next IWMC maintains this level, so please join us in making it happen!

We look forward to hearing from and seeing you in the coming year.

Sincerely, *Jonathan*



Jonathan Derbridge, IWMWG Chair, right, with Santosh Edupuganti of the Fishing Cat Conservancy, at TWS annual conference in Raleigh.

Check out our



feature: International Wildlife Study News on page 6!!

## Fellowship Supports Wildlife Leadership Across the Globe

By Claire Crow, Photos by Karla Pelz Serrano



**“The ultimate goal is a conservation strategy for your species, what steps are next, who are the stakeholders, how to approach them, how to get them involved.”**



**“I learned how to live with other people in unusual situations. I learned how conservation is accomplished in other countries, and saw how each method has its challenges.”**

**“Although all of the municipalities want to make income from the wetlands, some ways of generating income don't support healthy habitat. Karla's educational outreach promotes proactive collaborative planning.”**

Karla Pelz Serrano is a conservation biologist working in central Mexico on the restoration and recovery of endangered species and ecosystems. She is a professor in the Department of Environmental Sciences at Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana in Lerma, Mexico. I recently interviewed her about an international fellowship in wildlife management and leadership that provided training, financial support, international experience and networking opportunities in support of her ongoing work with the critically endangered Lake Lerma salamander *Ambystoma lermaense*. ~ ed.

The Zoological Society of London's Edge of Existence Program is focused on Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) species. These are species on the brink of extinction, and with few close relatives on the phylogenetic tree, meaning much evolutionary value would be lost should the species become extinct. Most EDGE species are extremely distinctive in the way that they look, live and/or behave. The program includes a fellowship for early-career conservation biologists who study or manage an EDGE species within their country of residence.

Karla Pelz Serrano's 2-year EDGE fellowship included a 4-week course in Kenya focused on techniques for ecological surveys, monitoring, GIS, statistics, and social science. Karla particularly appreciated learning how to approach communities, present effective environmental outreach to the public, and how to engage locals in citizen science. She experienced personal growth, learning to live with other people in unusual situations. The course gave her opportunities to see how conservation is accomplished in other countries, see how each method has its challenges. Her work gained exposure in other parts of the world. After learning to fundraise, choose team members, work with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures to put the plan into action, assess whether conservation goals have been reached, share accomplishments with sponsors, and publish to share information with the scientific community, fellows must create a strategic plan for how to proceed with a conservation project for their species, and a budget for spending the funding provided by the fellowship. Karla's fellowship also included a 2-week course in London, focused on becoming a leader in conservation.



Karla's EDGE species is *Ambystoma lermaense*, found only in a small set of wetlands in central Mexico. Little is known about this species, which is known locally as the axolotl. A distinctive characteristic is its exceptionally high capacity to regenerate limbs and parts of internal organs such as the heart. Regeneration has not yet been studied in the adult (salamander) stage. The trigger for metamorphosis has not been determined in this neotenic species. Karla is gathering basic ecological information on the genetic diversity, current distribution, population size, and incidence of disease in this species.

Another component of her project is educating and engaging local communities in conservation of the Lerma axolotl and its habitat. Water pollution, fragmentation as roads are developed, and lowered water table due to construction-related fill have rendered 90% of the wetland no longer viable habitat for numerous sensitive or special status species, and species in decline. Habitat restoration and protection for the axolotl will benefit these other species as well. Lerma axolotl habitat is currently divided into three isolated wetlands, each surrounded by urban areas. Karla's stakeholder analysis revealed a complicating factor: although all of the municipalities involved want to make income from the wetlands, some ways of generating income don't support healthy Lerma axolotl habitat. For example, one community removed the vegetation from the water to facilitate boating, which resulted in the loss of birds and reduction in axolotl density. She is now working with them to find a balance, in which sufficient vegetation will be allowed to grow back in most of the wetland

for birds and axolotl, and vegetation around the edge of the wetland would continue to be cleared to allow boating, which could include guided birding and other nature-focused tourism. Karla's educational outreach is designed to promote proactive collaborative planning. One of the communities has asked her to provide advice regarding wetland management, and to help them file a complaint with the government about illegal discharge from a factory.

The skills learned and funding provided by the EDGE fellowship have allowed Karla to begin simultaneously implementing multiple facets of her conservation strategy, and to generate new approaches to try and questions to research. How much would people be willing to pay for birding/nature tours, and would it provide a sustainable income for locals? How much impact does predation by non-native fish have on the axolotl? Would it be possible to improve the native fishery and re-open the market as a delicacy? A non-government organization recently found that the axolotl can be successfully bred in captivity, and donated live animals to Karla's laboratory and education program. This provides the potential for a long-term study on regeneration. Overall, it seems fair to say that the fellow, the EDGE species, other species dependent on the same habitat characteristics, local communities, and the global scientific community can all benefit from this fellowship.



A. Iermaense. Photo courtesy of Karla Pelz Serrano.

## IWMWG Meeting Highlights

The following are highlights from the International Wildlife Management Working Group "face2face" meeting at the TWS Annual Conference in October, and the IWMWG Officers meeting in January.

- ◆ We are currently 120 members strong! Over 500 "likes" on our Facebook page. Thank you to Han Li for his work on our FB page!
- ◆ The increase in dues from \$5 to \$10 allowed us to award travel grants to David García Solórzano (Mexico) and Santosh Edupuganti (India) to attend and present at the TWS Annual Conference in Raleigh.
- ◆ Planning to offer 2 or more travel grants for the TWS Annual Conference in Albuquerque.
- ◆ Executive Director Ken Williams attended our Working Group meeting, and encouraged the group to be active in helping TWS develop its international reach, particularly emphasizing the Society's continued interest in strengthening ties with Mexico.
- ◆ David García Solórzano wrapped up our Working Group meeting with a presentation on the work of Alianza Mexicana para la Conservacion de la Vida Silvestre A. C. (Mexican alliance for wildlife conservation).
- ◆ IWMWG officers are working with TWS International Involvement Committee to help clarify what TWS international priorities should be.
- ◆ Preparing proposal for a symposium on wildlife conservation in Mexico, Central and South America at the Annual Conference in Albuquerque.
- ◆ Support the Wetlands Working Group's suggestion to Council for an "All Working Groups" table near the registration desk at the Annual Conference in Albuquerque.
- ◆ Planning to staff a IWMWG booth in the vendors hall at Annual Conference in Albuquerque. Information will link with the "Crossroads of Cultures" theme.



David García Solórzano presenting to IWMWG members in Raleigh, North Carolina. Photo by Melissa Merrick.

**Congratulations** to former IWMWG Chair Jim Ramakka for winning the Mammals category in the photo contest at the TWS Annual Conference. His photo depicted a black-backed jackal (*Canis mesomelas*) biting a newborn calf wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*) in Ngorongoro Crater, Tanzania. Jim explains that a spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*), just out of the frame, would take the jackal's place whenever the female tried to fend off the jackal. Jim remains a highly active and much-appreciated member of our working group!





The Fishing Cat Conservancy focuses on public education, capacity-building, and community-based research and conservation actions.



Fishing cat in unprotected mangroves near Gilakaladindi village, Krishna River Delta, India.

***“After seeing all the support and encouragement I received at the conference, I was even more motivated and inspired to take pride in my work and continue what I do.”***



Camera traps are combined with the local Chenchu tribal members' expertise in tracking, animal behavior and natural landscapes.

## How the 2016 TWS Conference Changed My Life

By Santosh Edupuganti, Photos courtesy of The Fishing Cat Conservancy

Santosh Edupuganti received a grant from the IWMWG to attend and present at the 2016 TWS Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina. Santosh is the Lead Field Conservationist with the Fishing Cat Conservancy, an organization that accomplishes research and conservation of the fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) and its coastal mangrove habitat through education and citizen involvement in research and conservation actions. Major threats to fishing cats are limited awareness, poaching, and habitat loss. Operating on the principle that local people are the true custodians of their ancestral lands, the Conservancy educates and trains them not only in fishing cat ecology and research techniques, but also coaches and mentors them in pursuing conservation work as a livelihood and career. The Conservancy is dedicated to open source information sharing; [www.fishingcatconservancy.org](http://www.fishingcatconservancy.org).

Santosh has been working with the Fishing Cat Conservancy since January 2016. He quickly became adept at the components of research and educational outreach, and is now a role model for youth in coastal Andhra Pradesh, India, demonstrating that enthusiasm and diligence can lead to a career in local conservation. Below is Santosh's review of his experience at the 2016 TWS conference. ~ed.

When I first got a call from Ashwin (Ashwin Naidu, President and founder of The Fishing Cat Conservancy) saying I am coming to the US to give a presentation at TWS 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference at Raleigh, NC, I was speechless. I never took a flight before. I always dreamed of meeting wildlife professionals and experts.

The day that I was long waiting for finally came. I boarded an airplane for the first time in my life, a flight from Hyderabad. I landed in Raleigh and was received warmly by Ashwin's friends – Sophie and Bob. For the three days prior to the conference to start, I was spellbound by America's cleanliness, traffic rules and systematic way of life. On the first day of the conference, it all felt a little new to me. Ashwin told me how to interact with people. I attended a Data Management workshop on the first day, which I found very helpful. I learned new insights on how to manage and share data. I also attended some talks. The next day was a big day. The day on which Ashwin and I were going to give a presentation on “Fishing cats and its survival in the last remaining mangroves of South India”. I gave my talk and was ecstatic after seeing the cheer everyone gave us. People were coming up to me personally and congratulated me. I never experienced such a response before. This motivated me and made me realize that the work I do is of a great importance. We were trending on TWS 2016 app timeline feed. After that, I also checked out the exhibits and poster stalls. I saw many new innovations, and great works of some people, at these stalls. I also volunteered at TWS with the help of Josh Parris. He helped me a lot, everything was very new to me. He was the one who took me around made sure that I was comfortable. I had a great experience volunteering even though I had never before interacted with professionals at this level. That night we went to the social at NC State Museum of Natural Sciences and history. The moment I entered the museum it was like a new world. I had never been to a social interaction like this one, even in India. I interacted with many young undergrads and learned about their work and how educational systems in US work. Many people came to me and appreciated our talk and the work I am doing.

The next day I went to Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve. I learned about management techniques adopted by US park rangers. I also saw how well the trails are managed in the US. I also went on another field trip called “Behind the scenes – NC museum”. I saw how specimens are preserved, how AI works, and many other innovations. I also met many undergrads and professionals who liked the work we are doing for fishing cat conservation, and are interested in coming to work with us at the Fishing Cat Conservancy in the future. I also made a lot of good contacts. Some even offered to take me on as a master's student in the US in the future. I attended some very good talks some of which were quite related and helpful to the work we do. I made some very good friends like Corey, Ben,

Brandon, and Sky. After seeing all the support and encouragement I received at the TWS conference, and after everyone learned about our work, I was even more motivated and inspired to take pride in my work and continue doing what I do.

A note from Ashwin Naidu, Ashwin's employer and mentor, to all IWMWG members:

On behalf of the Fishing Cat Conservancy team, I thank you very much for supporting our work and for helping Santosh travel to the United States to attend and co-present our work on fishing cat conservation in coastal South India. The interactions we've had and the response we received at the 2016 TWS Annual Conference has inspired and motivated us in many ways. One of our biggest achievements of 2016 was to harness Santosh's will, as a young, 19-year old enthusiast, toward pursuing a professional career in wildlife conservation. Thank you.



## TWS Conference an Energizing and Memorable Experience

By Muhammed Awais\*

Muhammad Awais earned his MPhil in Wildlife Management from PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, and BS (Honors) in Zoology from Hazara University Mansehra, Pakistan. His thesis, researched in collaboration with the Abbottabad Wildlife Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department, focused on "Impact of climatic factors on human-common leopard conflict in Galiat Forests of Abbottabad, Pakistan". He has also been working on conservation of Asiatic black bears in north-west Pakistan with the Mansehra Wildlife Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department since 2015. He is particularly passionate about mitigating human-wildlife conflicts and management decisions in conservation, and has been involved in campaigns to raise awareness among community representatives about the importance of wildlife, and how to adopt preventive strategies to mitigate human-carnivore conflict.

Below is Awais's review of his experience at the 2016 TWS conference. ~ed.



TWS IWMWG member Muhammed Awais.



Thejaguarandallies.com



Awais, right, working with local resident in leopard habitat.



Camera trap captures leopard in Pakistan.

Last year's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Wildlife Society Conference, which took place in Raleigh, was my first ever TWS conference and it was a great, energizing and memorable experience. During the conference, my interactions with wonderful wildlife biologists and students were awesome, particularly those from USA and Canada. On a personal note, the conference was very well organized and successful.

I also attended a workshop on "Data management fundamentals for long-term wildlife studies" on the very first day of the conference, and I gained lot of new ideas in the discussions. I have gained amazing feedback on my poster entitled "Attacks by Asiatic black bear on humans in District Mansehra, Pakistan: 2001-2015". Suggestions made by experts on my poster were really helpful for its improvement.

Finally, I'd like to say I am very much excited to be the part of TWS and excited to attend 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Wildlife Society Conference in Albuquerque!

\*Photos courtesy of M. Awais, except where otherwise noted.

Membership in the TWS IWMWG includes a subscription to the *Passport* (the working group's newsletter) and opportunities to collaborate on international wildlife management-related topics. You can join or renew your membership by logging in to The Wildlife Society portal and adding the IWMWG to your annual membership; the cost is \$10.

Current TWS Members can join by:

1. Going to <http://wildlife.force.com/>
2. Enter your email address on file and password
3. Click on 'add memberships' on the bottom left
4. Scroll down to 'Working Group Dues' and select "International Wildlife Management Working Group"
5. Check out by entering your payment information

### International Wildlife Study News:

The Nov/Dec 2016 Wildlife Professional (Vol 10, No. 6) "Science in Short" section featured information on a recent paper published in the *Journal of Wildlife Management* which showed that surveys in a Bear Management Area (BMA) in Alberta, Canada, may have underestimated grizzly bear density by focusing on resident bears rather than considering the movements of bears in the single population extending across Alberta, British Columbia, and Montana. The study also recognized that a decline in the number of resident bears in the BMA could have been interpreted as a population decline, but looking at the big picture, across national borders, revealed another explanation: the bears may move to be close to the best food resources each year.

A new method of capturing neonate bison was included in the Jan/Feb 2017 Wildlife Professional (Vol 11, No.1). The study took place on a bison ranch in south-central Manitoba, which promotes bison conservation across Canada. Researchers from South Dakota State University, USA, developed a method to safely capture bison within a week of birth, in order to determine survival rates utilizing radiotransmitters. Through experimentation, the group learned that the nimbleness of a utility task vehicle (UTV) allows for efficient separation of young calves from their mothers in open country. A net-gun could then be deployed for capture, and the captured neonate was placed in the bed of a pickup truck, which provided protection from its mother. This technique did not have observable impacts on the bison, and it allowed the radiotagging of 30 neonates in about 16 hours of work spread over 4 days. The tagged animals were monitored for 80 days, and an estimated 97% survived.

The proposed delisting of the lesser long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris yerbabuena*) was reported in the March/April 2017 Wildlife Professional (Vol 11, No. 2). The US Fish and Wildlife Service's January 2017 press release credited bat-friendly agave harvest and cultivation techniques employed by tequila producers in Mexico, US federal agencies' management of forage plant species, and educational outreach in both countries, for the recovery of the endangered bat. State wildlife agencies and Bat Conservation International played crucial roles in protecting roost site caves and abandoned mines. Citizen science volunteers in Pima County, Arizona, monitored bat use of hummingbird feeders over 10 years, increasing biologists' understanding of the timing of migration and supporting the deployment of radiotelemetry for locating roosts. The press release quoted the Service's Arizona Field Supervisor, Steve Spangle, as saying, "These collaborative efforts have succeeded in recovering this important pollinator and seed disperser, contributing to healthy soils and habitats, and providing sustainable economic benefits for communities."

### Important upcoming events and deadlines:

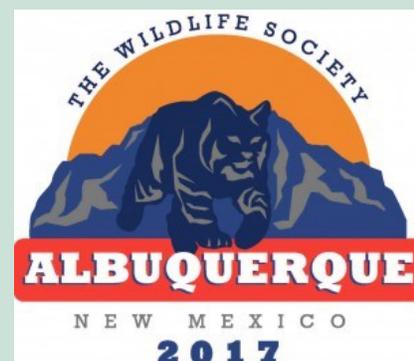
#### **2017 annual meeting in Albuquerque, Sept 23-27.**

- \* Abstracts for papers and posters due **April 10**.
- \* **May 1**— award nominations (other than Publications)

The theme of this year's conference is "Wildlife Conservation: Crossroads of Cultures".

Pre-registration will open in May. Early bird discount before July 15.

Watch the Conference link at the TWS website, and [TWSconference.org](http://TWSconference.org), for announcements.



THE WILDLIFE  
SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL  
WILDLIFE  
MANAGEMENT  
WORKING GROUP

Editor: Claire Crow  
corvid.feat@gmail.com

I hope you enjoy your  
Passport. Please send me  
your comments and  
suggestions for future  
issues! ~ Claire

**New Web Address!**  
[wildlife.org/iwmwg](http://wildlife.org/iwmwg)

**We're on Facebook!**  
[facebook.com/IWMWG](https://facebook.com/IWMWG)

International  
Wildlife  
Management  
Working Group

## Vision

The IWMWG will increase collaboration among wildlife professionals around the world.

## Mission

The IWMWG will provide a forum for information exchange through expanded use of communication technologies.

## Goals

1. To promote meetings and electronic communication among professionals worldwide working in wildlife management and habitat conservation.
2. To sponsor symposia and workshops and to host forums at The Wildlife Society's Annual Conference and other affiliated meetings.
3. To assist TWS staff in preparing technical reviews, position statements and other materials related to international wildlife management issues.
4. To encourage wildlife professionals worldwide to become members and participate in TWS activities and events.

---

## Working Group Officers:

**Chair:** Jonathan Derbridge ([derbridge@email.arizona.edu](mailto:derbridge@email.arizona.edu))

**Chair-elect:** Melissa Merrick ([mmerrick@email.arizona.edu](mailto:mmerrick@email.arizona.edu))

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Adrian Roadman ([adrian.roadman@gmail.com](mailto:adrian.roadman@gmail.com))

**Past Chair:** Robin White ([rpwhite@usgs.gov](mailto:rpwhite@usgs.gov))