

THE NORTHEAST SECTION OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER



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## Message from the President:

As 2020 came to a close, I was left thinking, "What a long, strange trip it's been," (thank you Grateful Dead). In a year of earth-shattering news, wildlife played a surprisingly visible role-- from the "wet markets" blamed for starting the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the public spectacle of the Tiger King that kicked-off our collectively sheltered lives, to the blatant and dangerous racism experienced by a bird-watcher in New York City's Central Park (see article by Tammy Colt on page 5). We noted that while stay-at-home orders led to a massive uptick in bird-watching and citizen science involvement, the ensuing nosedive in ecotourism tipped the scales in favor of poachers and wildlife traffickers around the world. Headlines reported murder hornets, sudden songbird die-offs, and massive wildfires killing and

## Message from the President continued...

displacing wildlife in Australia, Brazil, and the western U.S. Habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive species and disease, and climate change forged a perfect storm this year.

It seemed at times as if the whole world was burning, literally and figuratively. In a year that laid bare social inequities, there were encouraging signs of hope for wildlifers. Biology grad student Corina Newsome co-organized the first-ever Black Birders Week, with Black Mammalogists Week (co-organized by TWS member Rhiannon Kirton) soon to follow. These events gave voice to black experiences in conservation and inspired a more serious commitment to overcoming the lack of diversity in wildlife science and management. The Wildlife Society responded with a "promise to prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion in everything that we do." I recognized a lot of familiar faces from the Northeast TWS Section at Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) forums this year, and I know you have a lot to contribute. So, as we ring in the new year, let's get to work!

To participate in an ad hoc DE&I committee at the section level, contact me ([jfrair@esf.edu](mailto:jfrair@esf.edu)).

To join the national TWS Ethnic & Gender Diversity Working Group or TWS Council on Diversity Subcommittee, contact Jamila Blake ([jblake@wildlife.org](mailto:jblake@wildlife.org)).

National TWS is also encouraging you to participate in Wildlife Vocalizations: short, personal perspectives from the people in the field of wildlife sciences.

Here is wishing you a healthy, happy, and hopeful new year.



Jacqueline L. Frair, Ph.D.

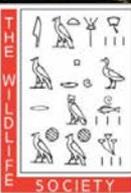
President, Northeast Section

TWS Fellow

Professor and Director of SUNY-ESF Roosevelt Wild Life Station

## Interested in hearing more from TWS...

Sign up [here](#) for our free, monthly edition of the *eWildlifer* — your one-stop shop for the latest wildlife news, Section and Chapter updates, TWS announcements, and more.



The Communications Committee is looking for a new  
**Newsletter Editor!**

If you are interested in filling this position, please contact the current Newsletter Editor, Tara McElhinney, at [taramcelhinney1@gmail.com](mailto:taramcelhinney1@gmail.com).

# Call for Nominations: TWS Northeast Section OFFICERS

The Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society is seeking individuals for the following Officer Positions for the Executive Board of the Section.

## Treasurer

The Treasurer shall collect membership dues and be custodian of all funds of the Section. All expenditures other than for postage and stationery must be approved by the Executive Committee. The Treasurer shall submit the records covering the period of the previous calendar year to audit within 60 days of the annual meeting, and shall submit an annual report of the financial status of the Section at the annual meeting.

In January of each year, a statement of calendar year incomes and expenses, starting and ending balances, must be submitted to the Executive Director of The Wildlife Society for federal tax reporting. The Treasurer need not be bonded.

## Member-at-Large

Members at Large serve in a non-voting, advisory role on the Executive Committee.

**Considering a run for office?  
See what current officers say about  
their experience in the boxes at right.**

**If you'd like to run, or to nominate  
someone you think should run, send an  
email to Tim Green, [tgreen@bnl.gov](mailto:tgreen@bnl.gov).  
Nominations should be received no later  
than 8 March 2021.**

## Treasurer (Tammy Colt)

**Challenges:** pulling together semi-annual treasurer's reports

**Most rewarding:** networking with people throughout the Section and at National, developing a better understanding of the roles of the Section and helping make those things happen

**In a nutshell:** If you can add/subtract (of course you can!) and stay somewhat organized, this job is easy and requires very little of your time. The bank account is established, and the banking is done almost entirely online.

Overall time and travel requirements for Section officers are minimal. We meet twice a year-- once at NEAFWA and then in the fall, sometimes in person but often by conference call or, now, Zoom. We periodically hold a conference call or Zoom, usually just an hour long, in addition to these.

## Member-at-Large (Emily Domoto)

**Challenges:** None!

**Most rewarding:** Staying in touch with wildlife happenings in the section and at National and being a part of connecting chapters with that information.

**In a nutshell:** If you are interested in TWS and wildlife issues, then you should enjoy this job! This job requires very little of your time. It will be important to participate in the couple of meetings held each year and feeling comfortable providing comments, if necessary. The meetings are enjoyable.

## Member-at-Large (Emily Boyd)

**Most rewarding:** Being involved in region-wide initiatives and making connections with professionals from across the region. This position was a good step towards developing a better understanding of the roles board members play in the Section as well as activities of the Section itself.

# Call for Nominations: TWS Northeast Section A W A R D S

Help us honor the work of our fellow biologists -- Nominate a colleague or student.



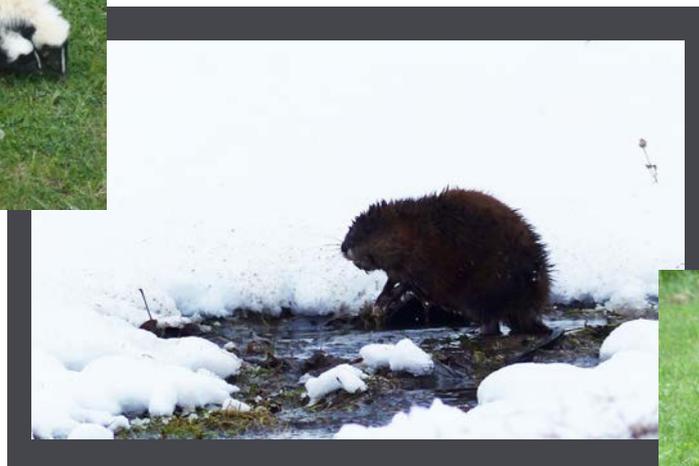
**Nominations/applications due by March 8**

**The John Pearce Memorial Award  
The PF English Memorial Award  
Certificates of Recognition  
Virtual Registration Grant\***

<https://wildlife.org/ne-section/about/awards/>

Awards and election results will be announced at a virtual members meeting this Spring, details will be sent via email later.

\*Students presenting at the annual conference may apply for a virtual registration grant.



The extraordinary photos in this issue are brought to you by **Roger Masse**, Assistant Professor of Wildlife Management at SUNY Cobleskill.

**Do you or someone you know love taking pictures of wildlife & nature?** We'd love to feature you in our next newsletter! Please contact Tara at [taramcelhinney1@gmail.com](mailto:taramcelhinney1@gmail.com).

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Spotlight: Black Birders Week

**By Tammy Colt**

In a year when racial issues boiled over in the U.S. and Black Lives Matter protests in several major cities made headlines, one incident hit close to home for us in the wildlife field. When black birder, Christian Cooper, was a victim of a racist incident while birding in Central Park, the news captured our attention.

The lack of diversity in our profession has been acknowledged for quite a while, but in many ways, we've only been paying lip service to the issue. The incident in Central Park has spurred a movement toward diversity, equity, and inclusion in the natural resource world, including The Wildlife Society.

Also rising from what happened to Mr. Cooper were some great social media

movements that garnered a lot of public interest, beginning with Black Birders Week, followed by Black Mammalogists Week and Blacks in Marine Science. The goals of Black Birders Week were to demonstrate that Black people can and do participate in outdoor activities like birding, to increase awareness of the challenges Black people face when they participate in these activities, and to increase diversity in the conservation arena.

Black Birders Week was organized by a group of Black students and professionals working in STEM fields in response to the racist incident in Central Park. Amazingly, this group pulled together a five day, completely virtual event in such a short time. Another Black Birders Week is planned for 2021; in fact, the plan is for this to become an annual event. To hear more about it, check out [Outdoors Online-- Organizing #BlackBirdersWeek](#), a virtual event on February 24, 2021 hosted by Natural Lands ([www.natlands.org](http://www.natlands.org)). The presenter will be Tykee James, National Audubon Society's Government Affairs Coordinator and a founder of Black Birders Week.

“

*We didn't pick our moment, but we are going to rise to the occasion.*

*The Black experience is not one only of trauma; it is one of joy and it is one of pride and it is one of strength.*

”

-Tykee James, National Audubon Society



# Member Spotlight: Val Titus

The Northeast Section of TWS is full of dedicated professionals doing amazing work with wildlife. One wildlifer who is always involved in Section work and serves as a mentor to many is Val Titus. We asked her about her experience in the wildlife field:

## What is your current position and specialization?

Assistant Professor and Program Director of Wildlife and Environmental Sciences at Keystone College; As a professor at a small college, I don't get in the field for my personal work as much as I would like, but I love getting my students in the field learning different skills. My main interests are in the impacts that humans have on wildlife, and my current work ranges from turtle and aquatic health to coyote diets. I love it all!

## What made you decide to get into the wildlife profession?

I have always been an animal lover. When I was 3, I would tell everyone I wanted to be a zoologist or paleontologist (I still LOVE dinosaurs). It took me a while to decide what career path to take (which led me to grad school as I was still deciding) and I fell in love with herpetology.

I dabbled in the zoo field a bit, and while I loved that work and the Bronx Zoo, I wanted more of a field component. After completing my dissertation, and having volunteered for the NE TWS Field Course for a few years, I decided that teaching wildlife was where my strengths were. Of course, I still have a lot of work to do to be half the professor many of my mentors were, but I love what I do and I get paid to play outside much of the time, so it works for me!

## What is the best part of your job?

I think I hinted at it above-- I love working with my students. It's so much fun to see them learning different techniques and discussing many of the issues that wildlife and environmental professionals have to face. I see a lot of potential in my students and I have a lot of hope for the future of our field.



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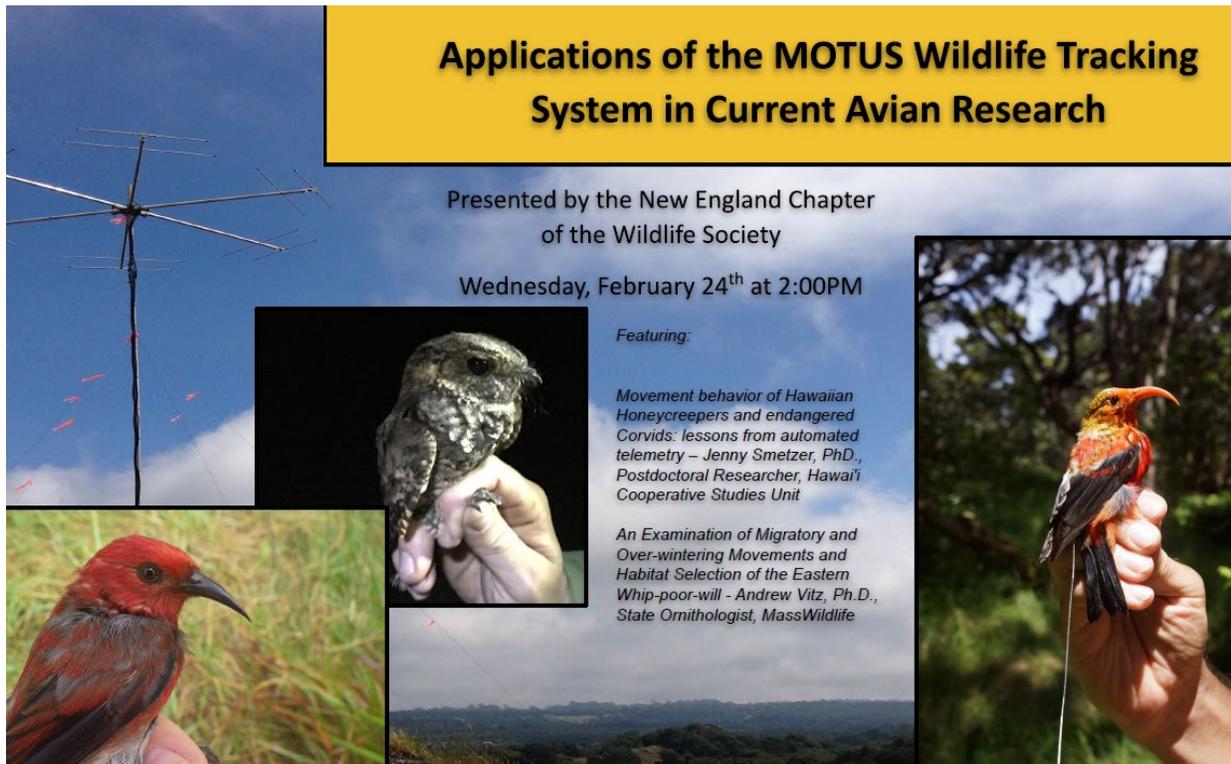
*Don't forget what brought you into the field to begin with- don't lose that spark!*

”

## What advice would you give to early-career wildlife professionals?

Take risks and enjoy being young! You have so much time ahead of you, get as many experiences as you can before you settle down in your career. The more hands-on experiences you can get, the better prepared you'll be! Don't forget what brought you into the field to begin with- don't lose that spark!

# Wildlife Tracking Webinar



**Applications of the MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System in Current Avian Research**

Presented by the New England Chapter  
of the Wildlife Society

Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:00PM

Featuring:

*Movement behavior of Hawaiian Honeycreepers and endangered Corvids: lessons from automated telemetry – Jenny Smetzer, Ph.D., Postdoctoral Researcher, Hawai'i Cooperative Studies Unit*

*An Examination of Migratory and Over-wintering Movements and Habitat Selection of the Eastern Whip-poor-will - Andrew Vitz, Ph.D., State Ornithologist, MassWildlife*

## The Zoom link and further details are below:

Topic: Applications of the MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System in Current Avian Research

Time: Feb 24, 2021 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting:

[https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83488902313?pwd=c2tKeLRyLzhvcUhis3VkeE1wVGNJUT09\\_!!CUhgQOZqV7M!xq1CMSZs5MLryzd87k3t3luHrKcfH7eoxTfwKpotJT6J-bWW1YT5\\_0IA6rpuX9EJUDaflde\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83488902313?pwd=c2tKeLRyLzhvcUhis3VkeE1wVGNJUT09_!!CUhgQOZqV7M!xq1CMSZs5MLryzd87k3t3luHrKcfH7eoxTfwKpotJT6J-bWW1YT5_0IA6rpuX9EJUDaflde$)

Meeting ID: 834 8890 2313

Passcode: 119755

For more details contact: Susan McCarthy, President New England Chapter  
[susan.e.mccarthy@mass.gov](mailto:susan.e.mccarthy@mass.gov)



### **How would you describe your experience with the Northeast Section?**

I've been active in the NE Section for a few years as the NE Student Affairs Committee Chair. I helped with (and hosted- once) the NE Student Conclave in a number of ways (one of my FAVORITE things to do!).

Prior to that, I had held nearly every office for the NY Chapter during my PhD years. I have attended a number of NEAFWA conferences and sat in on the NE Section meetings. Now, as the NE Representative to Council, I'm looking forward to getting to know more folks in other state chapters (I live in PA now, and I'm looking forward to getting involved on a more local level).

### **What is your favorite story to tell regarding your work?**

Oh, there are so many! Working with students, there's always a laugh around the corner- or a joke that makes me shake my head. So, rather than embarrass my students, though tempting as it seems, I will just end with a rewarding note: The best feeling in the world is when my 4-year-old daughter says, "Mommy, I want to be a mommy scientist like you when I grow up and chase animals and teach students."

Thanks so much for sharing with us, Val!

## **Annual Conference Update**



Due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, this year's **NEAFWA conference** will be held virtually on April 26-28, 2021. This will be a unique & exciting opportunity for collaboration and connection across the region.

Please **join the mailing list** to receive notifications as information becomes available, and be a part of the conversation on Twitter using **#NEAFWA!**

Stay tuned for details on the NETWS Executive Meeting and NETWS members meeting typically held during the event.

# Who's Who in the Northeast

Executive Board		
President	Jacqueline L. Frair, Ph.D.	jfrair@esf.edu
President-Elect	Megan A. Linske, Ph.D.	Megan.Linske@ct.gov
Immediate Past President	Scott C. Williams, Ph.D., CWB	Scott.Williams@ct.gov
Treasurer	Tammy Colt	tcolt@pa.gov
Secretary	Andrea M. Feldpausch-Parker, Ph.D.	amparker@esf.edu
NE Section Representative	Val Titus, Ph.D.	Val.Titus@keystone.edu
Audit Committee		
Chair	Mitch Hartley, Ph.D.	Mitch_Hartley@fws.gov
Awards Committee		
Chair	Gordon Batcheller, CWB	Gordon.Batcheller@gmail.com
Communications Committee		
Newsletter Editor	Tara McElhinney	taramcelhinney1@gmail.com
Webmaster	Ken MacKenzie	Ken.Mackenzie@state.ma.us
NE Representative to TWP	Scott C. Williams, Ph.D., CWB	Scott.Williams@ct.gov
Conservation Affairs Committee		
Chair	Karen Stackpole	
Operations Committee		
Chair	Tim Green, Ph.D., CWB	tgreen@bnl.gov
Student Affairs Committee		
Chair	Val Titus, Ph.D.	Val.Titus@keystone.edu
Student Development Working Group Rep.	Laken Ganoë	lsganoë11@gmail.com
Field Course Rep.	Bill Healy, Ph.D., CWB	healybg@hotmail.com
Field Course (Alternate)	John McDonald, Ph.D.	twsmcdonald@gmail.com
Workshop (ad hoc) Committee		
Chair	Megan Linske, Ph.D.	Megan.Linske@ct.gov

## Chapter Representatives

Maine Chapter President	Rodney Kelshaw	Rodney.Kelshaw@stantec.com
Maryland-Delaware Ch. President	Jane Burgess	mddechapter@gmail.com
New England Ch. President	Susan McCarthy	
New Jersey Ch. President	Elizabeth Ciuizio Freiday, CWB	Beth.Freiday@icloud.com
New York Ch. President	Budd Veverka	
Pennsylvania Ch. President	Samara Trusso	
West Virginia Ch. President	Holly Morris	