Semester Review

This year was among our most successful years at TCTWS. Our raffle basket at the 57th Annual Meeting of the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society sold out for the first time, and was the only one to sell out! Thank you again to everyone who bought tickets for our raffle basket, we appreciate your support. Even though it took place on a virtual platform this year, we still had a big turn out, with more than twenty members participating in this event. Congratulations to Sophie Morris for receiving the Colin Caruthers Memorial Scholarship and congratulations to Ariana Rivera for receiving the outstanding student in wildlife award! Megan Mahurin presented her graduate poster on Burrowing Owls and took third place in the graduate student poster competition. Congratulations to Megan on all her hard work!

The pandemic provided an unique opportunity to invite speakers from different parts of the country to come and speak via zoom. This broadened our range of topics among our guest speakers and career options outside of Texas. We thank all of our speakers that took the time to deliver great presentations to our members. We anticipate using zoom in the future to branch out to professionals outside of Texas because . Last but not least, a special thank you to the 2019–2020 Officer team for putting in the work to keep this organization running as smoothly as it did: Sophie Morris, Brandon Sagraves, Lainey Taylor, Justin Dawsey, Payton Hess, Joanna Fuess, Cat Lechnar, and Hannah Belinne. Thank you for all the creative ideas and determination to make this a great semester.

Lesser Prairie Chicken Capture/Camping Trip

This semester on April 16–18, seventeen of our members had the opportunity to participate in a Lesser Prairie-Chicken capture all while camping out on the Yoakum Dunes WMA. With help from TTU NRM alumni Austin Teague and Lucas Schilder, the undergraduates successfully caught, tagged, and released four Lesser Prairie-Chickens using a drop-net and walk-in funnel traps. This great opportunity provided hands-on experience for our members with a species that you don’t see every day. (We worked under all proper state, federal, and ESA permits and followed the required protocols under the Endangered Species Act.) The weekend was not all work though. Our members spent their free time at camp duking it out in intense cornhole games, telling jokes around the grill, and just having fun getting to know each other better. Overall, the weekend was a definite success.
Texas Tech’s Virtual Undergraduate Research Conference (URC) – March 2021

URC is held virtually to let undergraduates present their research and its impact orally or by poster. Additionally, attendees can visit with researchers via Zoom about their studies during the conference.

We had four members attend URC to present their research:

**Hannah Belinne** (Freshman) did a poster presentation and live impact talk on her work titled, “Morphometric approaches as a tool to distinguish three cryptic species of Myotis (Mammalia: Chiroptera) bats.” Recognized as an ‘Outstanding Presenter.’

**Sophie Morris** (Junior) did a poster presentation and live impact talk on her work titled, “The Distribution and Abundance of Cormorants in Texas.” Recognized as an ‘Outstanding Presenter.’

**Yasmin Saes** (Freshman) did a poster presentation and live impact talk on her work titled, “Assessment of Direct Fed Microbial (DFM) Combinations on Ruminal Microbial Efficiency Modulation Using a Continuous Culture System.” Placed 2nd place in the Agriculture Impact talk Presentation ($250 prize).

**Vivienne Lacy** (Sophomore) did a poster presentation and live impact talk on her work titled, “Initial examination of suspected prion disease resistance in Suborder Caniformia and Order Chiroptera reveals both susceptibility and resistance.” Recognized as an ‘Outstanding Presenter.’

**TTU NRM Fund for Excellence**

This year TTU NRM is announcing its first annual Fund for Excellence. A portion of the money donated through raffle tickets will go to a fund to support Texas Tech NRM students taking summer field-based classes at the TTU Center Junction campus. The money raised from this will go a long way to help further the education of young aspiring wildlife professionals. The raffle basket includes eleven different hunting/fishing experiences and eleven other raffle packages with great prizes! TTU NRM has created a truly great opportunity for anyone in any skill level interested in gaining experience with hunting/fishing or just wanting to get out to have a good time.
Senior Spotlights

Ariana Rivera | B.S. Natural Resource Management | Wildlife Biology
Hello, I am Ariana Rivera, a senior Wildlife Biology major, from San Antonio, Texas. I have had many cool wildlife experiences thanks to the Wildlife Society at Texas Tech. To name a few of my favorites, I have been on a Lesser Prairie Chicken capture in New Mexico, a White-tailed Deer capture in south Texas, and I spent a summer in Junction, Texas learning wildlife science techniques and making lifelong friends. In February of this year, I presented my research at TCTWS over one of the most beloved songbirds in Texas, the Purple Martin! I am studying the microclimates of artificial housing types used by Purple Martins to examine its influence on nest survival. I spent the summer of 2020 traveling to Canyon, Texas to collect microclimate data and band over 150 Purple Martin chicks! I am honored to be a small part of conserving such a remarkable species. Following graduation, I will be a crew lead working in New Mexico studying avian community response to Pinyon-Juniper management this summer. I am very excited to have the opportunity to handle so many songbirds in a pretty place like the Lincoln National forest in New Mexico. Following the completion of my field season, I would like to begin a master's degree. I am so thankful to Texas Tech and the Wildlife Society for making my four years of undergrad so amazing. Wreck ‘em!

Jorge Ochoa | B.S. Natural Resource Management | Conservation Science
Hi everyone! My name is Jorge Ochoa and I am a Conservation Science major from El Paso, Texas! After a good 5 years in Lubbock and Texas Tech, I'm glad that I'll be able to call myself an alumnus in May! Over my career I have taken a big interest in the field of mammalogy, and plant community ecology and I hope to work in the fields applying what I have learned from here to any future job that I may land. I hope to do this for some time to gain more experience before attempting to make a run for graduate school! This journey has been incredible, and I have had the honor and privilege to work with phenomenal people within the Department of Natural Resources Management, Biological Sciences and of course within the Texas Tech Chapter of The Wildlife Society. It was always wonderful working with groups of people all sharing the goal in making the world a better place and I am eternally grateful for the amazing memories and experiences which I was a part of, they are things I will cherish forever! GUNS UP!

Catherine Lechner | B.S. Natural Resource Management | Conservation Science
Hi, everyone, I’m Catherine Lechner! I served as the Ag Council Representative this semester! I am finishing up my degree in Natural Resources Management with a concentration in Conservation Science, but that’s not the last you’ll see of me! I will be starting my master’s at Texas Tech in June with Dr. Gill and the LEAF lab! My project will be focused on the relationship between invasive species and fire! I look forward to continuing to see everyone around campus! I have loved my time in the department and TWS, and all of the experiences I have had. I have been a part of four labs in the last four years, and each one was a completely different experience. My favorite memory is the pollinator project I worked on sophomore year! I identify bees, butterflies, and other insect pollinators. I was listed as a coauthor on the paper, and it has been published now! My advice is to say yes to any opportunity that crosses your path because you never know what fields you will like, or what skills are transferable.

Contact Us!

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