The Wildlife Society – Biometrics Working Group
Annual Business Meeting (Hybrid)
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
Monday, October 6, 2025
12pm-1:10pm MDT

Presiding: Brittany Mosher, Chair
Executive Board Officers and Members: Chris Rota, Franny Buderman, Jennifer Price Tack, Katie Gundermann, Annabelle Stanley

Meeting minutes were recorded by board members Franny Buderman and Annabelle Stanley because Laura Gigliotti (Secretary) was unable to participate in the meeting due to the ongoing government shutdown.

Zoom link was provided via email by Chair Brittany Mosher

Call to Order and Welcome (Brittany Mosher)
Brittany called the meeting to order at 12 pm MDT. Zoom was set up with a camera so members could participate remotely. Call meeting to order.

Secretary Report (Chris Rota filling in for Laura Gigliotti)
As per the standing policy, the previous year's minutes were distributed via email before the meeting, available on our website, and copies were provided to members in person. Minutes were not read and no members suggested edits and a motion was passed to approve the 2024 meeting minutes (Yea: 38, Abstain: 0, Nay: 0).

Laura has been working on cleaning up the BWG listserv, which currently has 413 members. She removed email addresses that were bouncing and cross-referenced the listserv emails with the email addresses on the TWS roster of dues-paying members. We can sometimes miss people because of changing emails due to switching jobs and listserv invites ending up in spam folders. If you haven't been getting emails from the BWG listserv, please email Laura. Additionally, about 50% of the email addresses on the listserv aren't associated with dues paying members because our policy is that anyone can belong to the listserv group. However, if you've lapsed in your dues, we encourage you to once again become a dues paying member. Thanks to everyone for continuing to use the listserv as a means of sharing relevant jobs and information with the community.

Audit Report (Katie Gundermann)
Katie did an audit on Jen's report. Unfortunately we did find a discrepancy of what we should have gotten but what we did. We will be working with Jen to clear up these numbers. That is all.

Treasurer Report (Jennifer Price Tack)
Jennifer presented the Treasurer's Report online. As mentioned in the audit report, there was a discrepancy between what we got and what we should have gotten in revenue. As reported in

the fall newsletter, the BWG balance is $21,492 (as of August 31, 2025). We haven't yet gotten revenue added from the workshop from this conference, so the balance should increase after this week. We pay some small fees to be a working group. We used to use Bank of America for our account, but TWS now manages all working group accounts and also provides support. We also have credit card fees that come out of our balance. We had 280 paying members as of our last roster, which is higher than last year (261). We had a surplus of money last year and have intentionally spent down that surplus by supporting more student travel awards. Now that the account has switched to being managed by TWS, Jen is working on ways to better keep track of the money.

Nominations and Elections Report (Annabelle Stanley)

Annabelle presented the election results. We greatly appreciated many nominations for Chair-Elect, Secretary and four Board Members, with Treasurer continuing a second consecutive 2-year term. Online elections were open for a little over a month and the link to the ballot was provided in the BWG Fall Newsletter. Congratulations to Krishna Pacifici (Chair-Elect), and Brielle Thompson, Sarah Bassing, Amanda Van Buskirk, and Josh Twining as new Board Members!

Student Travel Grants Report (Chris Rota filling in for Anna Tucker)

Chris (filling in for Anna) presented the recipients of BWG's student travel awards. We had 28 students apply, which is a lot more than in previous years, so thanks to those who helped spread the word. All applicants were invited to the BWG business meeting and social. After careful consideration, we awarded 5 travel grants:

- Chloe Beaupre (PhD, SUNY ESF): Linking caribou movement and mortality: A dynamic hazard approach to survival modeling
- Smith Freeman (PhD, University of Minnesota): Strategies for forest thinning: Minimizing impact on Pacific martin habitat
- Natasha Klappstein (PhD, Dalhousie University): Step selection functions with non-linear and random effects in mgcv
- Katie Mahlmeister (MS, Iowa State University): Improving waterfowl productivity estimates with drone surveys
- Claire Muia (MS, University of Kentucky): Estimation of population parameters and distribution of Southeastern Kentucky Elk Unit 4 reintroduced elk

BWG Awards Report (Katie Gundermann)

The BWG advertised 5 awards this year, but received very few nominations for some awards. As a result, the BWG Special Recognition Award and BWG Appreciation Award were not given out. Details regarding each award recipient will be shared with membership in the BWG Spring Newsletter and posted to the BWG website once available. Award recipients included:

- BWG Award of Excellence: Duane Diefenbach
- BWG David R. Anderson Outstanding Student Paper Award: Wendy Leuenberger for "Three decades of declines restructure butterfly communities in the Midwestern United States" in PNAS. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2501340122
- BWG Student Award of Excellence: Jordan Heiman and Mallory Davies

BWG Workshops and Symposium Report (Katie Gundermann filling in for Quresh Latif)
Katie presented updates on Workshops and Symposium on behalf of Quresh. The BWG supported a workshop and a symposium at this year's annual conference as well as 2 consulting-based help sessions.

- **Workshop: Fundamentals of Structured Decision Making**. Katie O'Donnell provided the update. As expected, it was not possible for US federal folks to travel to help put on this workshop, but we still had 5 people that co-instructed yesterday. The workshop ended selling out. We had a few no-shows and as a result there are a few extra books that are technically BWGs that we are unsure what to do with.
- **Symposium: Adaptive Management: Reducing Uncertainty in Wildlife and Natural Resources Decision Making.** Annabelle Stanley provided the update. The symposium will be on Wednesday October 8 from 1:30 – 5:30pm in Salon 9. Talks will focus on advances to adaptive management methodology and a diverse set of wildlife applications.
- **Help Session: Ask a Biometrician**. Amanda Van Buskirk provided the update. Help sessions will be held on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, from 12:00 – 5:00 pm in the Westing Centennial Room and are free for participants.
- **Help Session: Ask a Decision Analyst**. Annabelle Stanley provided the update. The help season is Wednesday, October 8th, 2025, from 8am-12pm.

Graduate Student Special Committee Report (Jordan Heiman)
Jordan provided an update on what the Student Special Committee has been working on this year. We initiated a Member Spotlight feature in the BWG newsletter and we would love to have more people highlighted. We are hosting a pre-gathering for students prior to the BWG social and hope that students will attend. A new initiative was leading an online Intro to R workshop that was offered alongside the TWS Student Development Working Group. This was a workshop for new R users and covered everything from installing R to using ggplot. The first workshop had 72 attendees and brought in over $700 for BWG. We'd like to run this workshop twice a year since it's really accessible for students. We've also been working on the Member Map which is an interactive map on the BWG Resource Hub showing where members are across the globe, although it's only a beta version currently and only available to people in the google group. The new chair of the Graduate Student Special Committee is Julie Brockman.

Follow-up question from Duane Diefenbach: From R workshops, who took them? Are they undergrads? All wildlife society members?
Answer: It was a mix of undergrads, grad students, and non-students and we didn't limit it to TWS members. The second workshop we ran opened it up to 100 people. Had 38 folks, also a mix of levels. The student development group wanted to make sure that the students were being prioritized for this. For the second workshop we did, we only opened it to non-students after the first week of registration

New Business

Special Round Table Discussion, Future Direction of Mark-Recapture Software (Jeff Laake)

Jeff talked about the upcoming round table discussion. It was initially only focused on Mark-Recapture now has expanded. This is a small community. Folks have developed software that are widely used, but are getting old and won't be able to maintain the software forever. This is the first cohort which is a unique position to be in to figure out the future of these programs. I've asked 7 different people including myself to speak on the program they have written. Then we will speak on advantages and disadvantages on doing that in an academic setting. The discussion will be Wednesday from 3:30-5:30 in Salon 11.

Workshop and Symposium Proposals for 2026 (Katie Gundermann filling in for Quresh Latif)

Katie talked on behalf of Quresh about workshop and symposium proposals for next year's conference. These were not shared prior to the business meeting, so we are not going to do a vote, but will be an FYI for folks to give feedback.

Symposium: Methods to increase the usefulness of data from long-term wildlife monitoring programs. Organized by David Delaney, Tyler Harms, Stephen Disnmore

Abstract: This symposium examines methods to enhance long-term wildlife monitoring by improving data quality, interpretability, dissemination, and efficiency. Presentations highlight approaches to reduce bias, expand access, and optimize sampling, while addressing challenges of integrating new methods. Case studies and discussion emphasize strategies to increase the value of long-term monitoring programs.

Questions from BWG members:

- Doug Johnson: Should there be more attention to monitoring issues rather than specific case studies (species specific or issues specific)?
- David D.: I think that's a great comment, will keep that in mind. Symposium would open with an overarching framework. Show how case studies might actually fit. We would encourage folks to cast a broader net. Good feedback

Potential Workshop: Hierarchical modelling. Organized by Franny Buderman

Background: A couple of years ago Franny proposed a similar workshop but it wasn't accepted because someone else was giving a Nimble workshop. Franny wants to propose it again because she has students who need to know this material. She'd likely have Katie Gundermann help her put it on.

Workshop/Symposium General Discussion

Franny: There has been concern that biometric working group workshops and symposium are not getting accepted by TWS. I talked with Tricia Fry about this. BWG used to be the primary folks offering workshops and this is how we bring in revenue. We then support student travel grants on those funds. If we are not able to offer as many workshops, can we maintain that revenue stream? Other working groups are offering other workshops. Nothing specific about the workshop offerings, it's just more competitive: 50% chance of getting selected. We want to keep on offering workshops but that is a smaller proportion of revenue each year.

Mike Gillingham: In your conversation, why is the total number being limited? We are in a huge venue they are all sold out. TWS could offer more workshops instead of caping it at 15?

Franny: Last year the timing was a limiting factor. The timing of the conference was shorter, so workshops had to be distributed throughout the meeting day. Sometimes it's timing of when the convention is bookable. If we have workshops on Sunday, how much are we paying for meeting? Tricia was pushing for online workshops as an alternative.

Duane: Do working groups have an advantage when proposing workshops?

Franny: There is a quantification of the benefits of sponsored workshops. The benefit of being sponsored has gone down because other groups are also sponsoring workshops. There is confusion about what it means to be sponsored by the working group. The working group gets the revenue. If you were not sponsored by a working group, then you could not set those fees to travel to the conference but that has softened over the years. We are working with Tricia to figure out what that means. BWG proposes a lot, so there is a chance that some won't make it in.

Brittany: Note that the initial call from the working group for proposals came and went but there is still time to submit proposals. Please continue to think about if you would like to submit proposals for sponsorship.

Brittany: Put Katie on the spot. SDM workshop next year?

Katie: I'll check with Mike and Sarah, and Abby. Might do similar thing to this year where have instructors and back ups. I think it's justified to offer it.

Other New Business/Topics for Discussion

Brittany: Last bit of scheduled business. BWG social is tomorrow from 5:30-7 at River City Revival House. Student group has pre-social kick off. Will wind down because there is drag bingo. No food or beverage provided.

Katie Moreri: Consumer of biometrics, not a producer. Representative Tony Wang is giving a talk today at 2:45 pm. Tony has created AI for wildlife for biometrics and is looking for developers.

This tool lets common folks who aren't developers interact with AI. Write to him at University of Florida if you are interested in learning more.
Chad Rittenhouse: Producer of over 100 non-thesis masters students. I think about how to make math accessible for those who are returning to school. It's 100% online and asynchronous. Thinking about federal colleagues and online workshops. As someone who has developed graduate certificates and online curriculums, I would be happy to contribute to that space.

Brittany: Colleagues at St. Andrews, had letter saying we should be directing what wildlife curriculum should entail with regards to quantitative training. We would be happy to kick off a discussion on that in Iowa next year.

Close of the Meeting
The meeting was motioned to adjourn by Katie and Chad seconded, with all BWG members voting to end the meeting at 1:08 pm.