
THE COMMUNICATOR

NEWS FROM THE NEBRASKA COOPERATIVE FISH & WILDLIFE RESEARCH UNIT

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The Next Ten Years

By: *Craig Allen*

The Nebraska Coop Unit has reached a number of milestones, which make it worth reflecting on our first dozen years, and upon the future. Despite being now twelve years old, the Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit is none-the-less still the youngest Coop Unit in the nation, by several decades. We've been extraordinarily productive, thanks largely to the quality and dedication of our staff and students, and the strong support of our cooperators. Valerie Egger, our founding Administrative Assistant, has retired. Valerie's hard work enabled other staff to focus on science, and building our networks of collaborators, locally, nationally and internationally. Wilma Gerena has replaced Valerie, and is doing a stellar job, aided by Caryl Cashmere. Caryl is an important component of institutional memory now that Valerie has departed.

Our first ten years were marked with many milestones – graduating our first Master's student, our first Ph.D. student, our first grants, our first completed projects. Those successes have been documented in our newsletters and in our annual reports. Importantly, our science products have been used by our cooperators to improve management and conservation of natural resources, and the variety of projects undertaken has been large and diverse. However, our next 10 years will not be

marked by more growth, as we are at capacity, but by a continuation of productivity at current levels. We will continue to provide science coupled with graduate student training, focused on questions of local, regional, national and international concern, for a wide variety of cooperators.

Despite tight budgets and increasing competition for funding, the Nebraska Unit has remained stable, with little turnover in staff. This is a testament to the hard work of our personnel, continued support from our collaborators and the efforts of our students in the field and laboratory. I look forward to the next decade of change. ❖

New and Changing Faces

We welcome **Cody Dreier**, **Wilma Gerena**, **Mark Kaemingk**, and **Baxter Seguin** to the NE Coop Unit.

Cody is an M.S. student working on the condition assessment of select Nebraska wetlands. He is advised by Craig Allen.



Wilma is the new administrative assistant for the Coop Unit, replacing Valerie Egger who retired in May. Wilma has been with the university for 13 years, most recently, at the Registrar's Office.

Mark is a Research Assistant Professor and coordinator for the angler survey project. Mark, replaces Chris Chizinski who took a tenure-track position in the School of Natural Resources.



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Baxter is an M.S. student working on establishing a monitoring network to assess population trends and habitat use in bats in Nebraska. He is advised by Craig Allen. ❖

Research Highlight

Where Anglers Fish in Public Waterbodies

By: Brian Harmon

The sun breaks over the horizon, illuminating a quiet, still, waterbody. Minutes later an engine rumbles as the first vehicle pulls up to the shoreline. An early rising angler pulls out his fishing rod and casts into the water. As time goes by, more and more anglers show up, each staking out their own fishing spot.

I'm studying the factors that predict where anglers choose to fish within a waterbody.

A preliminary analysis revealed that many of the variables that affect angler use (proximity to parking, camping, and covered picnic tables) are not related to catching fish. Other variables related to catching fish, such as depth and submerged wood, appear to have little effect on angler use. Anglers appear to make choices about where to fish according to variables that are not related to catching fish.



Anglers may also choose sites with fewer anglers to gain a sense of solitude. I am also assessing where anglers first choose to fish based on locations of other anglers. I expect that interactions with other anglers will have a significant affect on where anglers fish.

What can we do with this information? We can alter the environment and hence alter where anglers choose to fish. Fishery managers can reduce fishing pressure in specific areas or times to protect fish during sensitive life-history stages. Alternatively, managers could match anglers with areas likely to produce higher catch rates of fish.

CURRENT STATUS: Currently, I am recording angler locations in waterbodies near Lincoln. I will also be assessing where and how anglers fish within a waterbody during a single fishing trip. Additionally, I am conducting surveys to collect stated-preferences of angler site-choice. This research will conclude in October, and will provide fishery managers with the information necessary to alter where anglers fish.

PROJECT PI: Kevin Pope

FUNDING: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission ❖

Outreach Activities

During the last year, **Nick Cole** mentored an Environmental Science and Evolution student at Central Missouri State University who was interested in parasite ecology and animal behavior.

On February 4, **Nick Cole** presented job opportunities in Natural Resource Sciences at a 4-H Science Technology Engineering Technology job fair in St Joseph, MO to students in grades 6-12.

Nick Cole was also a science fair judge at the National Junior Academy of Science (NJAS) state science fair on April 21 at the Strategic Air and Space Museum in Ashland, NE. The 50 competitors represented the top five science fair winners from their respective regions across the state. The selected winners will represent the state of Nebraska in the NJAS National science fair competition.

Dan Uden and **Baxter Seguin** volunteered as science fair judges at Maxey Elementary in Lincoln, NE on February 18. There were approximately 20-30 science projects on display at the fair, representing a variety of topics. Each judge was assigned to grade 2-3 projects. A wide diversity of topics were represented, ranging from optimum paper airplane design for maximum flight distance to the comparison of decomposition rates among various fast food hamburgers.

Zac Warren and **Mike Whitby** delivered a presentation titled, "Bats!" for the Nebraska Chapter of the Izaak Walton League (IWL) at their Annual Meeting in Lincoln. The IWL is an

Outreach Activities continued on Page 3

Editor, Caryl A. Cashmere

Welcome to the Nebraska Coop Unit newsletter! The newsletter will be distributed two or three times a year.

Questions or newsletter ideas can be directed to ccashmere2@unl.edu, or 422 Hardin Hall, 3310 Holdrege, Lincoln NE 68583-0984.

The University of Nebraska—Lincoln is an equal opportunity educator and employer with a comprehensive plan for diversity.



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Outreach Activities, continued from Page 2

organization of conservationists, hunters, and anglers that help support education and conservation. The talk centered on the diversity of bats, their economic and ecological value, threats they are facing, and how our research is contributing to their conservation. It was well received and they have since been invited to deliver programs to local chapters in the fall. ❖

Moving On

Valerie Egger, administrative assistant with the Coop Unit for 12 years, retired in May. “In my nearly thirty years with

UNL, never was I as challenged (in a good way!) as much as in this position. It was never boring. This is a creative group, always thinking outside of the box. Somebody is always coming up with some new idea or new approach, and it was always, ‘Can we make this happen?’ ‘How do we do this, and still stay within UNL, state, USGS parameters?’ ‘What do you mean we can’t do this?’ It was a period of huge growth and learning, working for and with great people. It was an honor to be a part of building the Nebraska Unit.” Congratulations Valerie!

Congratulations to graduate student **Kent Fricke** who accepted a position as a small game coordinator with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism in Emporia, KS. While Kent is working as a game coordinator, he continues to work on his PhD. ❖

Announcements

Congratulations to Chris and Lindsey Chizinski on the birth of their second child, Pearl Kathryn on January 11. Lindsey is a 2012 graduate of the Coop Unit. Chris is a previous post-doc and creel coordinator for the Coop Unit. Pearl weighed 6 lbs 14 oz and was 19 inches long. Proud big brother is Elvis. ❖

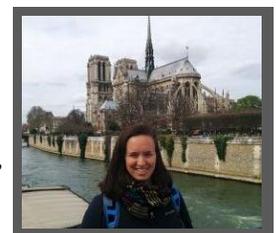


Honors and Awards

Hannah Birgé received the Dean’s Fellowship for the 2016-2017 academic year. The fellowship provides partial financial support to students who may accept assistantships or other work.



Jessica Burnett was accepted into the Center for Great Plains Studies graduate fellows program. This program provides space for selected graduate students to work, meet, obtain support, learn from fellow students, engage with the Center faculty and staff, benefit from the Center's resources, and progress in the degree programs in their home departments.



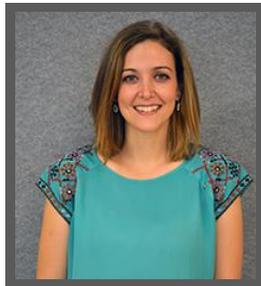
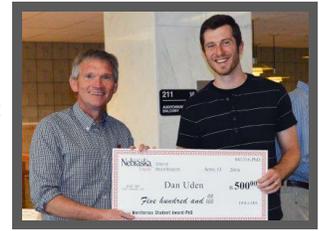
Honors and Awards continued on Page 4

Lucía Corral received the Arthur William Sampson fellowship. The fellowship is awarded annually by UNL’s Center for Grassland Studies to a graduate student who has an interest in pasture or range management in Nebraska. Lucía also received the Prairie Biotic Research small grant which provides small grants to support research of any species in the United States’ prairies and savannas.



highest level of academic potential and provides a stipend that allows the student to be completely immersed in scholarship without having to hold an assistantship.

Dan Uden received the School of Natural Resources Meritorious Graduate Student Award in the PhD division. This award is given to a PhD graduate student to recognize their academic achievements, research and teaching contributions, leadership accomplishments, and service and personal qualifications.

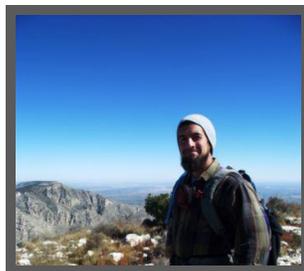


Alexis Fedele won the best student poster award for her poster titled, “Caught-and-released fish may alter behavior in responses to predatory anglers” at the Kansas/Nebraska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society meeting, February 23-24 in Manhattan, Kansas.

On February 25, the School of Natural Resources hosted its 3rd Elevator Speech contest where undergraduates and graduate students gave a three-minute speech about their research project without props or special effects. The following Coop students placed in the events.



Caleb Roberts was accepted into the Center for Great Plains Studies graduate fellows program and was the recipient of the 2016 Department of Agronomy and Horticulture’s Hutchinson travel award. The travel award is awarded annually to graduate students in range, pasture, and forage sciences who present research results at professional meetings.



- **Becca Bevans**, first place in the Master’s category
- **Brian Harmon**, third place in the Master’s category
- **Alexis Fedele**, fourth place in the Master’s category
- **Jessica Burnett**, second place in the Doctorate category
- **Michael Whitby**, third place in the Doctorate category ❖

Training

A Creel Survey Workshop was held March 23-25 in Lincoln, NE for the 2016 creel clerks. Beginning in April, the creel clerks will spend seven to eight months interviewing anglers at Nebraska reservoirs (Branched Oak, Calamus, Harlan, McConaughy, Merritt, Ogallala, Pawnee, Sherman, and Sutherland) to help understand how participation patterns of anglers influence fish populations.

At the workshop, trainees completed required safety courses, and became familiar with university processes for collecting and transferring data.

The 2016 state-wide creel clerks are: Aaron Gray, Lynn Hothan, Jeremy Johnson, Rhonda Lawing, Lindsay Ohlman, Gerald Ryschon, Dennis Thompson, and Jon Yates. Graduate



Victoria (Vicki) Simonsen received a \$1,000 Pheasants Forever Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded annually to support graduate students who are studying in the wildlife field.

Shana Sundstrom received a Maude Hammond Fling Fellowship which is one of the top two fellowships awarded by the graduate fellowship committee at UNL. The fellowship is awarded to masters or doctoral students who have demonstrated the



student, Brian Harmon is also assisting to interview anglers at area reservoirs, as is undergrad, Alisha Grams. ❖

Conferences/Meetings/Workshops

“The contribution of reserves and anthropogenic habitat for functional connectivity and resilience of ephemeral wetland networks” was the title of Dan Uden’s presentation at the American Geophysical Union fall meeting, in San Francisco, CA, December 14-18.

January 24-29, Alexis Fedele attended the Gordon Predator Prey conference in Venture, CA. Alexis’ poster was titled “Caught-and-released fish may alter behavior in responses to predatory anglers.”

Dan Uden attended the Nebraska Natural Resources District - Legislative Conference in Lincoln, NE, January 26-27. The title of his presentation was “The role of ecological reserves and anthropogenic habitats for the functional connectivity and resilience of ephemeral wetlands.”

Caleb Roberts attended the Society for range management 69th annual meeting in Corpus, TX, January 31- February 4. His presentation was titled “Fine-scale temporal modeling of Elk (*Cervus Canadensis*) habitat selection.”

In February, under the direction of Mike Whitby, Lincoln hosted the inaugural meeting of the newly organized Nebraska Bat Working Group. The group brought together researchers and managers from a variety of universities as well as federal and state agencies Zac Warren presented at the Inaugural Nebraska Bat Working Group in Lincoln, NE. Zac’s presentation was titled “Northern long-eared bat distribution

and habitat use.”

February 9, Dan Uden attended the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Informational Seminar in Grand Island. Dan’s presentation was titled, “Predictions of future waterbird stopover habitat.”

“The paradigm of amphidromy- a fresh (pun intended) perspective” was the title of Mark Kaemingk’s presentation at the Kansas/Nebraska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society meeting, February 23-24 in Manhattan, Kansas.

March 20, Jessica Burnett was a podcast interviewee for her presentation “Urban Wildlife Podcast.” The podcast aired on iTunes.

Lucía Corral gave a presentation titled “Assessment of swift fox distribution in Nebraska: Progress update” at the Swift fox conservation team meeting in Fort Collins, CO, April 20-21.

Caleb Roberts gave a presentation titled, “Walking the fenceline: A suburbanite meets a farmer” at the conference on the Sowell Collection in literature, community, and the natural world, in Lubbock, TX, April 21-23. ❖

Our Mission

Train graduate students for professional careers in natural resources research and management

Conduct research that will create new information useful for management of natural resources

Provide technical assistance to cooperators

OUR COOPERATORS

