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## San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the Wildlife Society

### Report from the Monterey Conference – The Role of TWS

*Natasha Dvorak*

Monterey, location of the recent 2009 National TWS conference, supports a tremendous variety of invertebrates, fish, birds, and sea mammals, including blue, gray, and humpback whales, Dall's porpoise, Pacific white-sided dolphins, shearwaters and albatrosses, northern elephant seals, northern fur seals, sea lions, sea otters, and sea turtles. This abundance of wildlife is supported by a rich, coldwater upwelling from the Monterey Submarine Canyon, plunging 6,000 feet deep just offshore.

I could go on and on about the wildlife, the beautiful setting, or fill you in on the luxurious details of an unforgettable private dinner at the Monterey Bay Aquarium and fun-in-the-sand limbo contests, held on the beach around bonfires and under starry skies while students and professionals mixed it up. However, I'll forego the fun and instead ask you, "What does it all mean?"

*Continued on pg. 7*

### Announcements: SFBA Chapter Events

Our Hawk Hill outing on October 17 was a success. The SFBA Chapter officers are all on fall vacation; however, stay posted for one last hurrah before the Western Section conference.

The Western Section's Annual Conference is coming up in Visalia, January 27-29, 2010. Section President-Elect Armond Gonzales reminds us that abstracts should be submitted by month's end.

## In Memoriam: Kellie Collins

The Bay Area Chapter has experienced a setback last month with the passing of Kellie Collins. Kellie lost her courageous battle with cancer on October 13, 2009, leaving a void in our collective family of wildlife management professionals. She worked as a terrestrial biologist at PG&E, but for us in the TWS Bay Area, she held a special place. Although nominated and voted to be the Bay Area Chapter President in 2008, she was not able to fulfill her duties and stepped down after a couple of months. Kellie was the rare Chapter member who was always the first one to sign up for any workshop or conference, accepting any thankless professional chore with enthusiasm, competence and grace. We will miss her valuable contributions in thinking of new ways to deal with environmental issues, and as a wonderful human being.

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“It is easy to find fault, if one has that disposition. There was once a man who, not being able to find any other fault with his coal, complained that there were too many prehistoric toads in it.”

- Mark Twain

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## Editor's Notes

*Brian Pittman*

### **Northern Leopard Frogs – 90-Day Finding to List**

As a Glen Ellen native, somewhere the notion entered my head that Jack London sheltered a secret *Lithobates pipiens* population just on the outskirts of town. Granted, the nearest described *R. pipiens* population to the Bay Area is from the Lake Tahoe Basin. Anyway, upon hearing of the federal 90-finding to List *L. pipiens*, I was motivated to revisit my childhood haunts to dispel this rumor; only to find an especially stripy population of bullfrogs. For me the effort was a complete bust; though my 3- and 5-year old boys who tagged along considered it the best hike ever. Anyway, the Service recently reopened public comment on a 90-day finding to list *L. pipiens* in the Western United States as threatened, with comments due by November 27, 2009.

Early this year the California Natural Diversity Database started tracking *L. pipiens* populations in California. The 22 database records include 9 presumed native occurrences from the counties of Modoc (2 records), Inyo (6) and Mono (1), and transplants outside of the native range in the counties of El Dorado (4) and Tulare (3) with one record each from the counties of Merced, Imperial, Placer, Kern, Orange and Riverside. Over 98 percent of this species' geographic range occurs outside California and few northern leopard frog populations are treated as native in California.

Jennings and Fuller (2004) identify that “Northern leopard frogs of unknown origin were introduced into El Dorado, Kern, Los Angeles, Merced, San Francisco, Sierra, Tehama, and Tulare counties between 1905 and 1970. Several of these introduced populations experienced rapid growth and range expansions before completely disappearing.”

*Continued on pg. 6*

## LIFE AT THE TIPPING POINT

T.A. Roberts

When you read the morning paper as religiously as I do, for 45 minutes in the predawn darkness, with a cat and a cup of tea, you start seeing things with a sort of shamanistic perspective. There's more here than the noble and venal events of everyday life; all the stories are signs and symbols and portents. In 1994 and 1995 the environmental news was mostly bad, with the Gingrich congress out to hamstringing the Endangered Species Act; but even then you could sense that the pendulum would swing, and so it did. You could track the change in both the headlines and the little stories on the back pages.

Recently, charting the status of the environmental cause, and indeed the environment itself, is much less satisfying and more like mapping the stock market, where no one can seem to see much form and pattern. Take the last week in September. On September 23, Dianne Feinstein called for a "third-party scientific review" of two federal biological opinions that restrict water deliveries to farmers in the Central Valley. She denied this had a political basis, but it looked bad, even if on the same day she *fought* a resolution to suspend the ESA in its entirety when dealing with water issues. What was up with that whole business?

On September 27th, the Fresno Bee reported that releases would begin from the Friant Dam into the San Joaquin River, with the eventual goal of a wetted surface flow all the way to the Delta. What? How could that have happened? On September 28, NMFS proposed de-listing the humpbacked whale for the simple reason that the population grew from 1,400 in the mid-1960 to an estimated 18,000-20,000 in the north Pacific today. This must be good news, surely.

On the 30th, we read that finally, all four of the Klamath River Dams were coming out, a victory over nitrate foam and algae blooms and maybe in time to save the Klamath salmon. A few years ago that seemed completely impossible, with farmers illegally opening an irrigation canal's headgate three times in a week while a sheriff stood by, refusing to intervene. Hooray! However, on the same day the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals issued a major decision (Stockton East Water District v. U.S., 07-5142) that looked pretty ugly. The court reversed a Claims Court opinion that found the Bureau of Reclamation's failure to deliver contracted water to be legally defensible. Which is to say that nothing would stand in the way of sending water from the Delta, let alone a tiny, ugly fish like the smelt. That is, I think that's what it said.

What this might be, I surmised, is that we don't have trends to predict. What we have is a collision of good and bad news nothing like a pendulum at all, but a tipping point where we will wobble back and forth for quite some while. These are interesting times.

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"It's not so much that the road to hell is paved with good intentions as that the road to hell is paved."

- Unknown

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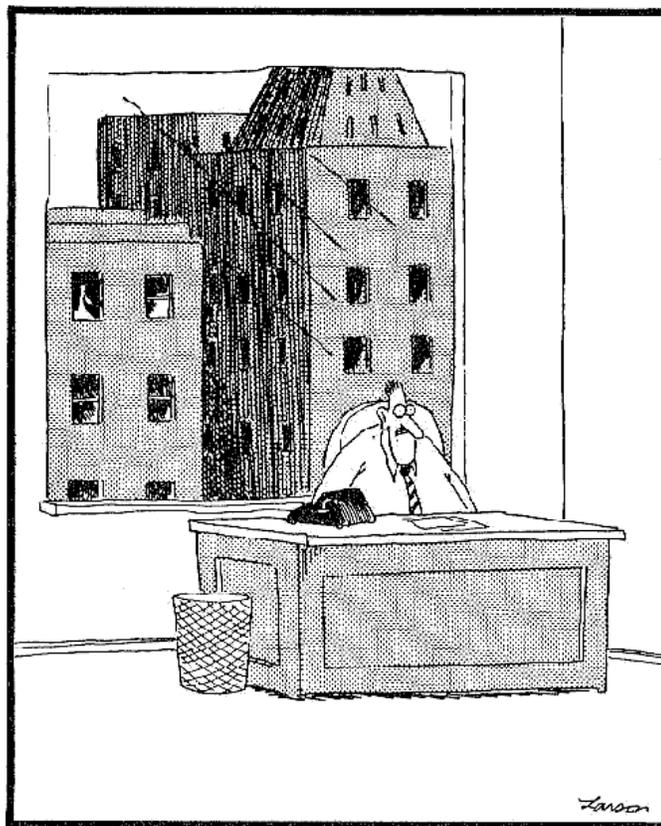
## Secretary/Treasurer's Report

*Dana Ostfeld*

Our Secretary-Treasurer Dana Ostfeld keeps the financial wheels greased and turning down at the SFBA Chapter headquarters. When she's not cracking the whip on the Oompa Loompas, Dana spends her quiet hours knitting and running the SFBA Chapter funds through her fingers. She reports that we now that four sponsored students (and funds to sponsor 16 more!) and 107 Chapter members with about \$12,000 in the bank.



Dana Ostfeld



Anatidaephobia: The fear that somewhere, somehow, a duck is watching you.

## A Word from our Sponsors

As outlined in the spring 2009 *Wandering Tattler*, on April 14, 2009 the Board voted to reduce student membership fees to \$5 and allow the sponsorship of student members by board-approved “corporate” sponsors. Moving forward, we’ve recruited a handful of eager students and our effort to boost student numbers and participation in Chapter events is working! Chapter membership numbers and student participation is back on the rise.

This month we would like to acknowledge URS Corporation and Joe DiDonato, Wildlife Consulting and Photography for their financial contributions to sponsor SFBA Chapter student members. Along with our initial three student members who have benefited from the program, we welcome Kristina Bischel who is new this quarter. I’m still waiting for Reg’s UCB students who attended the Hawk Hill outing to contact me (I’m thinking now that the hawk suit may have scared them off). If you’re able to support this initiative, please consider making a donation. Prospective sponsors and student members should contact Secretary/Treasurer Dana Ostfeld.

- Brian P.

*Joseph DiDonato*  
*Wildlife Consulting & Photography*  
510 326 8175  
*joedidonato@alamedanet.net*



## Upcoming Workshops and Events of Interest

### California-Nevada Declining Amphibian Population Task Force (APTF) 2010 Annual Meeting – Postponed Until 2011

The annual APTF meeting, previously scheduled for January 6-7, 2010, has been postponed until 2011.

The 2-day APTF meeting in 2011 will still be held in Yosemite.

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### 2010 Annual Conference of the Western Section of The Wildlife Society

January 27-29, 2010  
Visalia Convention Center, Visalia, CA

Abstracts are being accepted through November 30, 2009 (per the website). See:

[http://www.wildlifeprofessional.org/western/ac2010\\_abstract\\_submit.php](http://www.wildlifeprofessional.org/western/ac2010_abstract_submit.php)

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## Northern Leopard Frog

*Continued from pg. 2*

Except for a small population of northern leopard frogs present in Merced County, all of these introduced populations have apparently perished after persisting for varying periods of 5 -25 years.”

### Reference

Jennings, Mark R., and Michael M. Fuller. 2004. Origin and distribution of leopard frogs, *Rana pipiens* complex, in California. California Fish and Game 90(3):119-139.



*L. pipiens* historical range in California  
(courtesy www.californiaherps.com)

## Monterey Conference – The Role of TWS

*Continued from pg. 1*

To what end were we gathered in that beautiful natural setting as wildlife biologists and specifically as members of The Wildlife Society, sharing research and results?” Are we, as professionals, accountable for just our research, or are we accountable to something much larger, something like the bottom line, something like global warming and species extinction? Are we accountable to those whales, porpoises, seals, sea lions, sea otters, sea turtles, shearwaters and albatrosses beyond our conference window?

I think many, or most, of us would answer “Yes”, and this affirmative answer is a good indication of why we choose to be involved in this professional society. Yet, despite our involvement and our research and results, the situation around us grows more dire as global warming, land consumption, and a renewed energy crisis compete with the resources available for appropriate wildlife stewardship. How, then, do we ensure our efforts are evident in the bottom line?

The answer I sought and overwhelmingly received during both the plenary and a follow-up symposium titled *Advocacy, Policy, Science and Professional Societies* pointed to the active involvement of chapters and sections in local and regional wildlife issues. Engagement in advocacy is an uncomfortable grey area for many of us- whether, why, what, how, and how much we advocate. And yet, if there is a lesson to be learned from the corporate world, it is that advertising is crucial to the success of anything. Getting the message out there, and backing it up with sound and respected business practices, is critical for accomplishing goals. And it is critical for our TWS Chapter as well. I applaud our Chapter’s recent action to discuss and later sign the Senate letter regarding

climate legislation. I applaud the Western Section’s letter in support of the National Park Service’s *Non-native Deer Management Plan* at Point Reyes, providing crucial scientific advocacy at a time when California senators and legislators were considering abandoning sound science in favor of their minority constituents’ misguided protests.

Conducting sound science, and supporting each other in educating the public and policy-makers about responsible wildlife stewardship, is our responsibility as a society; the professional risks that sometimes accompany this outreach can be absorbed and minimized through the collective mission, support, and advocacy of a professional society. Decisions are going to be made and policies enacted with or without our input. Let’s figure out how to be more collectively aware, more collectively involved, and more collectively powerful at influencing the bottom line. The active involvement of chapters and sections in local and regional wildlife issues is encouraged. As wildlife biologists, protecting Monterey’s, and all of California’s, wildlife legacy for the future is something we are uniquely educated to do. TWS National’s immediate-past-president Tom Franklin asks, “If we don’t do it together, who will?”



Natasha busy at her practice in the marshlands of Sonoma County

## Hawk Hill Outing Highlights



A group of 15 to 20 SFBA chapter members and affiliated students turned out on October 17, 2009 for an informative outing at Hawk Hill in Marin County. Most of us tried to keep up with the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory staff and volunteers as they worked through their regular raptor monitoring routine, snapping out raptor detections with uncanny speed and talent. The viewing was anything but humdrum, with noted observations including a broad-winged hawk, a few peregrine falcons, and a full squadron of sharpies and Cooper's hawks.

For quick reference, a female Cooper's hawk is about the size of two chili cans duct-taped together, plus tail. A sharp-shinned hawk is a bit smaller – about the size of two Jiffy brand cornbread boxes.



The SFBA Chapter thanks Allen Fish for contributing to the success of this outing. Here Allen explains the basic in-flight differences between Cooper's and sharp-shinned hawks.

For volunteer opportunities with GGRO as a hawkwatcher, bander or radiotelemetrists visit their website: [www.ggro.com](http://www.ggro.com).

## SF Bay Area Chapter Officer Directory

<b>President</b>	Doug Bell (dbell@ebparks.org)
<b>President-elect</b>	Christine Gaber (ckorourke@hotmail.com)
<b>Past President</b>	Ron Duke (rduke@harveyecology.com)
<b>Secretary/Treasurer</b>	Dana Ostfeld (dostfeld@esassoc.com)
<b>Chapter Representative</b>	Natasha Dvorak (ndvorak@esassoc.com)
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Brian Pittman (bpittman@esassoc.com)
<b>Webmaster</b>	Luke Maculay (luke.maculay@gmail.com)



Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*) protecting its nest (upper left), Sonoma Co., CA. Photo by B. Pittman

## Chapter Newsletter

Submit articles to the Chapter Newsletter! Let the rest of the Chapter Members know about the wildlife issues in your corner of the woods. Any submittals, stories, comments or insights are appreciated.

<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Mailing By</b>
April 15	April 30
July 15	July 31
October 15	October 31
January 15	January 31

Please submit electronic articles to:  
bpittman@esassoc.com

Submit hardcopies to:  
Brian Pittman  
ESA  
1425 N. McDowell Blvd., Ste 200  
Petaluma, CA 94954

## Membership Renewal

If your membership dues are not paid for 2009, or you would like to become a member please contact Secretary/Treasurer Dana Ostfeld. Regular annual dues are \$10 and \$5 for full-time student. Without naming names, if you're not a student please don't check the "Student" box when registering online through TWS National.

## Chapter Website

The Chapter Website is up and has our archived newsletters and recent events. Look for new events to be posted on the site.

Our website can be found at:

<http://joomla.wildlife.org/sanfrancisco/>