

Michigan TWS



@MichiganTWS



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ABOUT US

The Michigan Chapter of The Wildlife Society was founded in 1982. Chapter members include administrators of government wildlife programs, research scientists, managers, technicians, private consultants, educators, enforcement personnel, information specialists and students.



THE CHAPTER WORKS:

- To promote sound stewardship of wildlife and other environmental resources
- To increase appreciation of wildlife values
- To promote the highest standards in wildlife professional activities.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

March 19-20, 2025



The 2025 annual meeting of the Michigan Chapter of TWS took place at Treetops Resort in Gaylord, MI. The meeting was filled with great presentations, connections between members, and lively discussions.

The conference kicked-off with the Trapping Matters workshop, featured Gary Roloff as plenary, 25 oral presentations, 11 posters, a student-run raffle, book exchange, booths from a number of vendors and organizations, and concluded with a chapter business meeting.

Thank you to everyone who attended, especially those who gave presentations!

AWARD WINNERS

Student Professional Development Award

Hannah Bey
Ava Whitlock

MSU-Sponsored Travel Grant Awards

Gabrielle Nielson
Evan Wahmhoff

President's Award

Gael Sanchez

Best Oral Presentation

Ava Whitlock and Brody Gleib

Best Poster Presentation

Lauren Schagel





President:
Matt Ihnken



President-Elect:
Paul Keenlance



Past President:
Clay Wilton



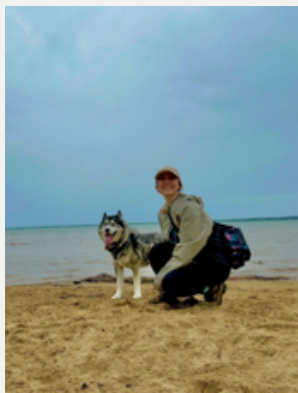
Treasurer:
Samantha Courtney



Secretary:
Rachel Kanaziz



Board Member:
VACANT



Board Member:
Cierra Freese



**Interested in joining
the 2026 board?**

Nominations and elections take place every fall. Please feel free to reach out to us if you are interested in running for one of the roles listed above!



SPRING 2025

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

As we welcome the spring field season, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your continued dedication to Michigan's wildlife and natural resources. I especially want to acknowledge and support our federal employees who continue to serve in challenging times—your work is deeply valued and appreciated.

To our members in northern Michigan affected by the recent ice storm, please know that our thoughts are with you as recovery continues. We recognize the challenges this has brought and remain committed to supporting you however we can.

Looking ahead, the Chapter will soon begin planning our 2026 Annual Conference, and we're excited to bring everyone together again. Be sure to keep an eye out for updates on this, as well as upcoming training opportunities and local meet-ups throughout the state.

It is truly an honor to serve as your Chapter President. I'm grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such a passionate and dedicated community of professionals.

Wishing you all a safe, productive, and rewarding start to the field season!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Ihnken".

Matt Ihnken

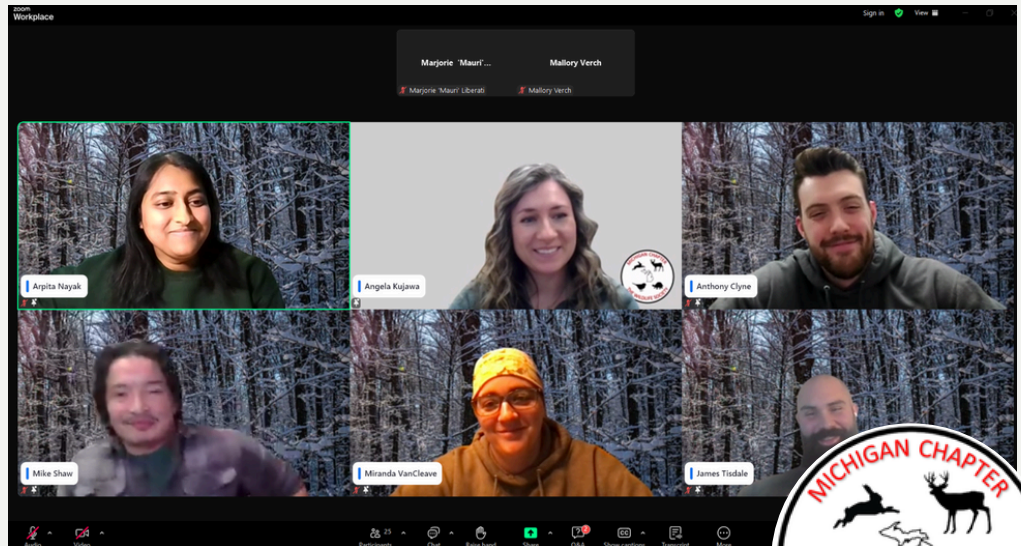
President, Michigan Chapter of The Wildlife Society



Workshops

These events are created and run by the Information and Education Committee to offer continuing education and career development for our membership. If you are interested in helping to develop these resources, please reach out to Rachel Kanaziz (michigantws@gmail.com).

Event Photos



Virtual Graduate Student Panel

Michigan TWS hosted a Virtual Graduate Student Panel on January 28, 2025. This panel featured multiple graduate students in various stages of their programs from universities across the state. Graduate students shared their perspective on finding a graduate opportunity, life in graduate school, conducting wildlife research, and more. This event covered a wide variety of pertinent topics that were great for students considering graduate school and current graduate students.

Trapping Matters Workshop

This workshop, which took place during our 2025 Annual Conference, featured primary tools and techniques used in trapping, with an emphasis on Best Management Practices and how traps can be used effectively. It was run through the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies with a goal of advancing awareness and communication skills related to regulated trapping among agency professionals.

TWS Certification Summit

This open session provided participants with knowledge on the objectives, requirements, and applications of TWS's certification program through a series of presentations and discussion. The hosts, Jim Schneider and William Miller, offered participants an opportunity and assistance in starting their own applications and provided feedback.

See our calendar of events:

<https://michigantws.wixsite.com/mitws/copy-of-member-events>

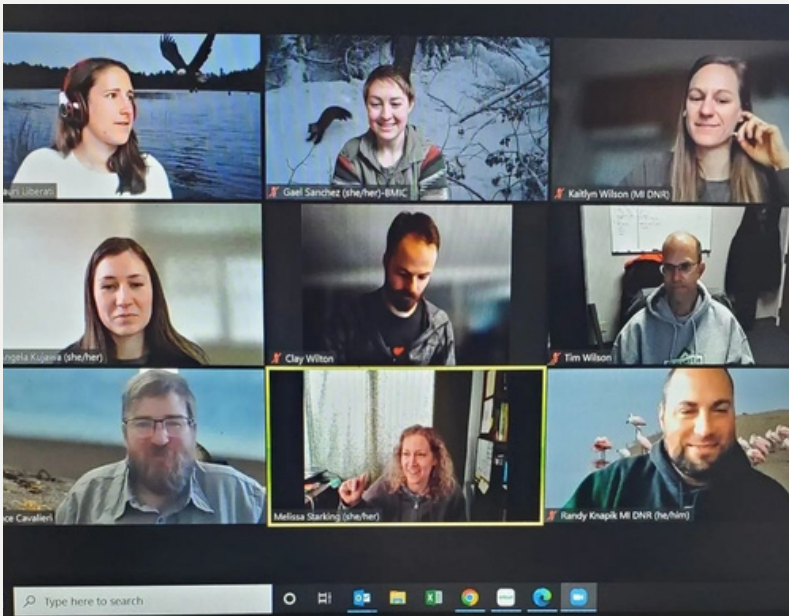
Take Action



Committees

Become involved in
Michigan TWS!

Any Michigan TWS member can join a committee. This is your chance to become involved in the chapter, develop important skills, network with biologists from across the state, and make a real difference for wildlife. Committees meet around once a month in a virtual format.



Information and Education Committee

This committee is tasked with employing methods to inform and educate the public on basic wildlife management concepts and on Chapter and Society activities and interests.

Awards Committee

This committee shall consist of a chairperson and at least 2 additional members. It shall review student travel grant awards, President's award recipient, and the Legacy award nominations.

@MichiganTWS

Michigan TWS

Spring 2025

Program Committee

This committee is tasked with arranging programs and planning our annual conference.

Nomination and Elections Committee

This committee is selected annually by the Executive Board to prepare a slate of candidates for each of the elective positions, namely: President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and two additional Executive Board members from the membership of the chapter.



Conservation Committee

This committee is tasked with reviewing legislative proposals, administrative regulations, environmental assessments and impact statements, and other subjects or issues affecting wildlife or wildlife habitat within the organization area of the Chapter and make recommendations to the Executive Board for any action that should be taken by the Michigan Chapter. The Chairperson may ask any Chapter member to assist with review.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM COORDINATOR AND ACADEMIC ADVISOR

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE, MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY.

JIM SCHNEIDER



WHAT DO YOU DO?

In my role at MSU, I wear many different hats, but I'm mostly responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Undergraduate Advising Center, including: advising ALL current and prospective Fisheries and Wildlife undergraduate majors regarding academic programs and University policies; advising Fisheries and Wildlife majors during New Student Orientation; implementing activities related to recruitment and retention; assisting students with summer and permanent job placement; serving as Advisor for the Fisheries and Wildlife Club; serving as coordinator and lead instructor for the professional internship course; and serve as instructor for study abroad courses offered through the Department (mostly to Africa).

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR POSITION?

The reason I actively pursued such a career path, and absolutely love my job, are the students. I had mentors through my academic career that had significant impacts on me and my journey. I felt my contribution to the profession could be to help and support the next generation of fish, wildlife, natural resource and environmental professionals. Fortunately for me, natural resources programs changed their advising model and started hiring professional advisors to work with their students. My first opportunity was at Penn State, and based on that position, I knew I'd made the right choice. I absolutely love working with and helping this community of young professionals. And, one of the bonuses of my position, because of my wildlife background, is leading study abroad programs. I've been very fortunate to be able to take hundreds of students on once in a lifetime conservation adventures to Africa, primarily South Africa and the greater Kruger ecosystem. The impacts of these programs have on students, and myself, are life changing.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL CURRENT AND FUTURE PROFESSIONALS ABOUT BEING INVOLVED IN MITWS?

I believe all wildlife professionals (current and future) should be members of the Wildlife Society, at all levels, but especially at their local level. Having a strong network of wildlife professionals to connect with, work with, collaborate with and just BS with can only help you become a better wildlife professional yourself. To me, that all starts with the Wildlife Society - Student Chapter, Michigan Chapter, North Central Section and the parent society.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING IN YOUR FREE TIME?

Having worked on prairie chickens, sharp-tailed grouse, and sage grouse in my early years, the pursuit of game birds is my happy place. Calling in a Thunderchicken in the Spring, or chasing Pats, Timberdoodles and/or Ditch Chickens in the Fall over a good gun dog just can't be beat. When not in those pursuits, my wife and I enjoy traveling to various U.S. and international destinations (having visited all U.S. States, we're now working on U.S. Territories, as well as Canadian Provinces and Territories); fishing, taking in live music; sampling new breweries and eateries; or just spending quality time with our aging Gordon Setters.





GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

AVA WHITLOCK

STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

SPRING
2025

TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR STUDIES.

I have just received my Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Biology from Grand Valley State University, with minors in Natural Resources Management and Political Science. Additionally, I am entering the graduate program at the university to pursue a Master of Science in Biology.

WHAT MAKES YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT WORKING WITH MITWS?

I get excited about working with MITWS because it is an incredible opportunity to collaborate with individuals who are also passionate about wildlife conservation. I have enjoyed and am excited for future endeavors with the organization, such as helping contribute to the growing network of the marten working group. Overall, hearing about and conversing with others about their research and management throughout the state is always an invaluable experience, regardless of whether or not it is related to my field of interest. This year, I am most proud of establishing a TWS student chapter at GVSU to promote even more collaboration between students and professionals, and I

am excited to see what the future holds.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE WAYS TO SPEND YOUR FREE TIME.

My absolute favorite way to spend my free time is to go birding. I enjoy going to parks and natural areas throughout Michigan, during all seasons, to enjoy various habitat types and their accompanying species. One of my favorite memories is when I had the opportunity to go on a Kirtland's Warbler walk with MITWS in Grayling, where we got to observe nesting individuals. This was the first time I had ever seen the species, so the event holds a special place in my heart. I also enjoy looking for snakes, frogs, and salamanders in the ravines on and around campus. Blue-spotted salamanders and blue racers are my favorite herps to find.

WHAT'S YOUR BEST ADVICE TO NEW MITWS STUDENT MEMBERS?

I would encourage new MITWS student members to be curious about what projects people are currently involved in, and to not be afraid to communicate and network with other members! Push yourself out of your comfort zone. If you are passionate about something, chances are someone else in the society is too. Connections and collaboration are critical in succeeding in the wildlife and natural resources fields, so take advantage of the opportunities that are available through MITWS. Every member of the organization wants to see each other succeed, so engage with them whenever possible.





STUDENT CHAPTERS

Central Michigan University

Lake Superior State University

Michigan State University

Michigan Tech University

Northern Michigan University

Grand Valley State University



**Interested in starting a
student chapter at
your school?**

Contact us to learn how!

The Wildlife Society's 147 student chapters are composed of student and professional members of the Society. Based at college campuses across North America, these chapters establish their own locally-focused objectives and have their own bylaws, officers, committees, and dues structure.



HIGHLIGHT

Student Chapter

Grand Valley State University

OUR NEWEST STUDENT CHAPTER

Michigan chapter is excited to announce the official creation of the GVSU student chapter! This chapter is already making waves and supporting early career professionals. We cannot wait to see what the future brings for this group!



Events in 2024/25

- Muskegon Sportsmen for Youth Day Outreach Event
- Pierce Cedar Creek Institute Trail Management Workday
- Birding Event at Hofman Park, Grand Haven
- Habitat Management Workdays on GVSU property
- Pierce Cedar Creek Institute - Native Plant Sale and Transplantation Workday
- Member Lexi Sisty received travel grant to the 2025 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference

BOARD MEMBERS

President: Ava Whitlock

Vice President: Eden Hodgson

Membership Officer: Jenna Ulrich

Financial Officer: Ava Sweeney



@gvsuwildlifesociety



tw@mail.gvsu.edu

Spring
2025

Looking

F O R W A R D



Annual Conference 2026

We are actively planning our 2026 conference! If you would like to have a voice in conference planning, please consider joining our Program Planning Committee (michigantws@gmail.com). Conference updates and announcements will be shared on our website and through the MITWS listserv

Workshops

Stay tuned for more details regarding a radio-telemetry workshop that we are planning in the UP this fall. Updates and announcements will be shared on our website and through the MITWS listserv.

Social/Field Trips

Watch for updates regarding a field trip/social event that we are planning with John Ball Zoo this summer. Updates and announcements will be shared on our website and through the MITWS listserv.

Follow Us



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<https://www.facebook.com/Michigan-Chapter-of-The-Wildlife-Society>



michigantws@googlegroups.com



michigantws@gmail.com

Are you a Michigan TWS Member?

Here's how to become one!

- When signing up to become a TWS member or renewing your membership:
 - Choose to add "Michigan Chapter" under the "Chapter" drop down.
- At any other time:
 - Under the "Membership" tab of your TWS profile, select "Add Organizational Unit Membership". Then under the "Chapter" drop down, select "Michigan Chapter".

OR

- Sign up to become a Michigan TWS member without a national TWS membership. This can be done on our website under the "Membership" tab.

Becoming a member of Michigan Chapter of TWS provides unique opportunities to connect with other wildlife professionals and build important networks. Membership includes regular information updates for upcoming events and opportunities and helps you to grow as a leader in the field of wildlife.

Membership is \$10/yr

Both professionals and students can benefit from becoming a part of this chapter!

