



Fall 2017

# Humboldt Wildlife Alumni

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## Department Update

Fall is well underway here in the Wildlife Department. Students are wrapping up semester projects and getting ready for end of semester exams and presentations. It's an exciting time on campus. Students, faculty, professionals and alumni just enjoyed a well-attended Winter Mixer hosted by the California North Coast Chapter of The Wildlife Society. It is so rewarding to see these various groups of wildlife enthusiasts get together to share food, stories, advice and job opportunities – we are a strong community.

The alumni continue to support our students with internships, jobs, and mentoring, among other important contributions. Two ways that alumni have financially contributed to supporting current students in the Wildlife Program here at Humboldt State University are through contributions to the Conservation Unlimited Alumni Association Scholarship Fund and the Wildlife Department Trust. This year's Alumni scholarship recipient, Alex Jamal, and last year's recipient, Holly Gamblin, are highlighted in the next section. Donations to the Department Trust support students in many different ways, including summer research experiences that we have highlighted in previous newsletters. Two of the undergraduate students supported by these funds, Katrina Lopez and Karis Wright, worked on a collaborative project investigating Roosevelt elk ecology in Humboldt and Del Norte counties.

This elk project is a good example of collaboration among HSU, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other agencies that protect and manage our wildlife and their habitats. Faculty members Tim Bean, Rick Brown and myself are co-PIs on this project, and we collectively have 4 graduate students completing their Masters theses on this project. Six undergraduates have completed honors theses on various elk-related questions, and an additional 20+ undergraduate students have gained valuable field experience by volunteering on the elk project. These experiences have included conducting road surveys to count elk, field surveys to collect scat for fecal mark-recapture, radio telemetry of tagged elk, mapping studies of home ranges, and participating in elk capture. Furthermore, these experiences have brought



Micaela Gunther spends a day in the field with two undergraduate students. Karis Wright (left) was supported by summer field experience funds and Erica Siepker (right) completed her honors project on Roosevelt elk. Photo credit: Kellie Jo Brown.

together HSU faculty and students with professional colleagues in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service, California State Parks and even some private landowners that are contributing to the greater study. These have been successful partnerships that serve as excellent models for up-and-coming wildlife biologists that we are working to train at the same time as we are working to understand more about our local Roosevelt elk population.

Best wishes for many more wildlife experiences and adventures in the New Year. Happy 2018 to all! - Micaela Gunther, Department Head



Current HSU Wildlife graduate students Erin Nigon, Emily Buck and Rudy Mena with HSU Wildlife alumna and CDFW biologist Carrington Hilson (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) immobilize a cow elk to place a GPS collar on her to track her movements. Photo Credit: Emily Buck.

## Alumni Scholarships

### Holly Gamblin – 16/17 Recipient

I entered the Wildlife program in the Fall of '15 as a transfer student. Since entering the program I made it my goal to gain as much experience in my field, both in the classroom as well as through extracurricular activities. I'm happy to say that I've come a long way since I first stepped foot in the Wildlife building on campus. My knowledge in the field of wildlife conservation as well as a personal understanding of my conservation ethics blossomed over my time at HSU.

Being a student in this program gave me the opportunity to work on a wide variety of projects, ranging from geese, Steller's jays, pygmy horned lizards, porcupines, elk, and even mountain lions. My last project work involved focal observations of elk for my behavioral honors thesis, assisting a graduate student on dissections of Aleutian cackling geese, and volunteering for the Institute of Wildlife Studies on their mountain lion camera trap research project. I am very grateful to be a recipient of this scholarship, since it allowed me to focus my time on gaining knowledge and experience in this field without the financial pressure of school.



## Alex Jamal – 17/18 Recipient

My name is Alexander Jamal, a Lebanese/Hispanic transfer student with an Associates of Science in Biology from College of the Sequoias in Visalia, CA. I come from a broken home, although my brother and I have received all the love, encouragement, and support that any young adult could ask for in our time of need. I came to love education and the outdoors as a young boy growing up on the streets of Los Angeles.

This is my second year as a wildlife student here at Humboldt State University, and I have to say, it is one of the best decisions I made to come up here. The program is everything I researched and more, the instructors are amazing, the field experiences are informative and exciting, and we are taught to be productive professionals when we graduate. Humboldt State is simply located in an amazing area surrounded by breathtaking scenery and I am truly honored to be here.

My first year I was lending a hand with professor Tim Bean concerning giant kangaroo rat dispersal and distribution across the San Joaquin valley. This year I am assisting another professor, Jeff Black, on his river otter citizen science study as well as monitoring collared migratory Aleutian geese. I am currently learning many techniques and tactics that wildlife professionals use in the field and for community outreach that I can apply to my future career.

Receiving this award from such a prestigious group of individuals has shown me that I am currently on the right track for a future Wildlife career. I have received good grades, volunteered with countless organizations, been a member and chairmen of clubs, maintained a part-time job and have conducted research with professors and built relationships with them. To receive this scholarship and to be recognized for my efforts, I am tremendously thankful and appreciative for your organization's contribution to my education. It is sincerely a great honor and will be held in my deepest respects for a lifetime.

Thank you for believing in me,  
- Alex Jamal



Mentor Session at the Winter Mixer for Wildlife Students and Professionals, hosted by the California North Coast Chapter of The Wildlife Society. Photo credit: Korinna Domingo.

# Tracking Wildlifers

- Reed Sanderson '57

My days at Humboldt were from January 1955 to June 1957. Wildlife faculty consisted of Chuck Yocum and Ray Dasmann; Richard Genelly followed in 1956. I don't know how many wildlife students there were, however CU had about 60 members in the '55 Sempervirens Annual photo, which also included fisheries and forestry majors. My guess is there were 20 to 30 wildlife majors. I attended Colorado State University (1957 to 1959) earning a MS degree in Range Management and ventured forth into a career in U S Forest Service Research.



My first job was in Susanville CA (Bitterbrush Propagation); followed by a transfer to the San Joaquin Experimental Range, on Hwy 49 south of Coarsegold, CA in 1963 (Annual grass and Mountain Meadow Production). In 1966, we moved to West Virginia (Even Age Timber Management Impact on Wildlife, Gray Squirrel habitat). My claim to fame was a 2-acre gray squirrel enclosure. In West Virginia, I lost track of happenings in CA except for a few wildlife buddies. In 1976, we transferred to La Grande, OR. I worked on the Congressional earmarked Oregon Range Evaluation Project. We transferred to the Santa Rita Exp. Range (Green Valley, AZ) in Dec 1989. I worked 2 weeks and retired! In a nut shell, that is about it for my FS career.

We remained on the Santa Rita Exp. Range (SRER) and volunteered half time in exchange for housing. We really did not know if we wanted to live in SE Arizona and were testing the climate. In 1991, The University of Arizona took over the management of the SRER because the land was transferred to the State and the UA was the taking institution. I continued to volunteer as the Acting Manager for the UA until July 1996 when we got a supervisor from Hell. My wife, Georgie, and I looked at each other and decided we did not get paid enough to put up with his obnoxious and abusive management style. We resigned and moved to Green Valley.

In the meantime, the UA offered me a paid job on the Mt. Graham Biological Programs (AKA Mt Graham Red Squirrels and Telescopes) in April 1992, which I negotiated as a half time position. With the publication of "The Last Refuge of the Mt Graham Red Squirrel", I really retired in 2009.

I did visit Dick Genelly before he passed away. At the time, Chuck Yocum had retired and was living in Sun City Phoenix; Ray Dasmann was at either UC Berkley or Santa Cruz. I briefly saw Dasmann at the first independent TWS Annual Conference in Albuquerque in 1994.

I have been a member of The Wildlife Society since 1955 (63 years) when Dr. Dasmann stated that, if we were going to be Wildlife Biologists, we needed to join TWS. I am a Certified Wildlife Biologist and have served on several committees and have been



honored with several awards including the Fellow recognition. Being a member of TWS has provided many opportunities; especially attending Chapter, Section, and Annual Conferences. Today, I know Wildlife Biologists in Canada, Australia, and U.S. – many of whom are not only colleagues, but also my friends. I am proud to be a Humboldt Alumni and a member of CUA.A. An interesting book to read is Richard Ridenhour's "Natural Resources at Humboldt State College – The First 30 Years". I recommend it.

### Get Involved!

Have ideas for future newsletter articles, alumni activities, or a story to share?

Contact Ryan Baumbusch:

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## Bylaws Revisions

Following the separation of Conservation Unlimited Alumni Association from the Humboldt State University Alumni Association the Executive Board has undertaken a review of the old Bylaws. Changes are needed to better manage the day-to-day activities of the organization and provide for the long-term management and direction of CUA.A. To accomplish these twin goals a proposal has been made to change the governance structure of CUA.A. The current governance structure includes an elected Executive Board composed of officers who look after the day-to-day activities and the long-term management. This structure has not worked well for CUA.A in part because we are a highly dispersed organization and in part due to the inconsistency in commitment. The proposed changes to the Bylaws call for a Board of Governors who are responsible for the long-term management of CUA.A. To meet the day-to-day needs of CUA.A the Board of Governors will select an Executive Officer. The Executive Officer serves at the pleasure of the Board of Governors and manages the day-to-day activities of CUA.A. The Board of Governors are selected by the membership. Each Board member serves a term of 5 years. Each year 1 member of the Board of Governors term is up for election. The Board of Governors also includes an Ex Officio member from the faculty of the College of Natural Resources and Sciences. The establishment of a long-term Board of Governors and Executive Officer will help meet both the short-term and long-term needs of Conservation Unlimited Alumni Association. We are hoping to vote on these bylaws at our annual meeting during the Western Section Meeting, in Santa Rosa, February 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>. See you then!

# Alumni Meeting

The Western Section of the Wildlife Society's annual conference is coming up!

The meeting will be held at the Hyatt in Santa Rosa, CA from Feb. 5-9, 2018.

An HSU Reunion will be on Wednesday Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-6:30 in Hospitality Suite 123.

Come by, catch up with old classmates, meet current students, and hear how the department is doing these days and what is going on with CUA.



Be sure to also check out all the great research being done at by students at HSU. Below are lists of all the presentations by students and newly fledged alumni.

## HSU STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

### WEDNESDAY

#### **Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles I**

Adrian Macedo

#### **Ecology and Conservation of Mammals I**

Pairsa Belamaric

#### **Ecology and Conservation of Birds I**

Xeronimo Castaneda

### THURSDAY

#### **Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles II**

Justin Demianew

Dustin Howland

### FRIDAY

#### **Ecology and Conservation of Birds III**

Nora Papian

#### **Ecology and Conservation of Mammals IV**

Katrina Smith

#### **Wildlife and Climate Change**

Jenni Jones Scherbinski

Alyssa Semerdjian

Ivy Widick

### Stay in Touch

#### **Like us on FaceBook:**

[www.facebook.com/HSUWildlifeAlumni](http://www.facebook.com/HSUWildlifeAlumni)

#### **Forever Humboldt:**

[forever.humboldt.edu](http://forever.humboldt.edu)

### Poster Session

Bayan Ahmed

Tina Arthur

Emily Buck

Lauren Enriquez

Michelle Harris

Adam Mohr

Nicolette Nelson

Erin Nigon

Karen Oakden

Sarah Schooler

Alyssa Semerdjian

Jessica Whalen