Wildlife Movement and Migration – CHAT Workshop

Arizona/Nevada/Utah June 5th 0800-1700 and June 6th 0800-1200, Mesquite, NV
Hosted by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Mule Deer Working Group, The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Wyoming Migration Initiative, and the NV State Chapter of The Wildlife Society

Agenda

Day 1 (June 5th)

8:00   **Welcome and Introductions**
TENTATIVE: Nevada Department of Wildlife Director Tony Wasley will welcome guests and provide opening remarks. Jim Heffelfinger, chairman of the Mule Deer Working Group of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Brian Wakeling, Game Chief, Nevada Department of Wildlife, will welcome attendees and provide an overview workshop's goals and objectives.

8:15   **Migration science and conservation** (30 min + 15 min Qs)
Matt Kauffman, director of the Wyoming Migration Initiative and leader of the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Unit, will discuss the latest advances in migration science and conservation efforts.

9:00   **Migration tools** – (30 min + 20 min Qs)
Hall Sawyer, research biologist and project manager with Western Ecosystems Technology Inc., will discuss how GPS technology can be used to identify and prioritize migration routes, and how such tools can be incorporated into management and conservation actions.

9:50   **Break**

10:00   **Federal policy for migration corridors on public land** – (45 min + 15 min Qs)
Matt Skroch, with the Pew Charitable Trusts' U.S. Public Lands Program, will introduce/moderate leads from the federal land agencies who will discuss existing and new policy at the Department of Interior and Agriculture. We will give special attention to components of Secretarial Order 3362 issued in February 2018 that directly calls for close partnerships between the Department of the Interior and western States to enhance and improve the quality of big-game winter range and migration corridors.

11:00   **WYGFD - incorporating corridors into State policy – via skype (40 min + 20 min Qs)**
Staff from WYGFD will discuss their recent effort that engaged diverse stakeholders to devise an approach to recognize migration routes as critical habitat and adopt a statewide ungulate migration strategy.

Noon   **Lunch**

1:00   **Breakout into "Policy Group" and "Migration Mapping Group."** State and federal staff who work in the policy and management realm will join the Policy Group breakout session. Biologists and science staff who work with GPS collar data and/or modeling will join the Migration Mapping Group.

<u>**Breakout 1 - Migration Mapping Group – Jerod Merkle, Wyoming Migration Initiative**</u>
1:00   **Migration Mapper tutorial and data analysis**
        Jerod Merkle, postdoctoral researcher with Wyoming Migration Initiative, will walk through how to use Migration Mapper, a new, user-friendly tool that allows practitioners to apply the latest scientific method to modeling migration routes using GPS collar data. This session will include working with datasets that participants bring as Wyoming Migration Initiative staff are on hand to help.

<u>**Breakout 2 - Policy Group - Facilitated by Eric Sproles, WAFWA CHAT Coordinator**</u>
        Collar data and the identified wildlife corridors derived from them have considerable bearing on policy and management decisions at the state and federal levels. As federal policy on this issue continues to develop, state wildlife agencies will need to form and enact their own policy approaches. Coordination and collaboration between state and federal agencies will be an important component in conserving newly identified and known migration corridors.

1:00   Matt Kauffman will begin by presenting a brief overview of how location data in Wyoming flows from individual collar locations to policy.

1:20   A focus group session will attempt to capture the needs and practicalities of state and federal policy and management experts for consideration as additional migration-related policy is developed at both levels. Qualitative data will be derived from the discussion without attribution to individuals to better inform colleagues.

        <u>Topics:</u>
        1. How can/do states develop and enact their own policies that integrate well with federal agencies?
        2. What types of challenges exist when forming policy based upon migration across political boundaries?
        3. Think pragmatic – In your role, what types of geospatial data and information are most relevant?
        4. Think big - In a perfect world what types of geospatial data and information would be most useful for developing informed policy regarding migration across political boundaries?
        5. Are there state policies regarding habitat/species specific data that need to be amended? If so what and how could this be most effectively addressed?

 4:30   **Reconvene both groups for wrap-up / final thoughts / questions**

 5:00   **Adjourn**

Day 2 (June 6th) Transforming individual researcher data into migration and habitat identification

GPS collar data represent hard-won field campaigns by state biologists and a considerable investment of state resources. These data provide considerable professional and research opportunities for state biologists, who should maximize those opportunities and retain control of these rich datasets. While valuable, each set of collar data represents a component of westwide migration. How can the efforts of individual field biologists and their collar data be integrated into a westwide migration dataset to bring greater certainty to land-use decision making, reduce potential conflict between stakeholders? Can the mule deer community make the whole more than its sum parts, while still allowing researchers to retain spatially explicit data?

8:00   Matt Kauffman (Wyoming Migration Initiative) will discuss transitioning Wyoming's collar data into an integrated product, its benefits, and its pitfalls. (i.e., influence on policy, leveraging more funds, expanding beyond the F&W community)

8:30   Eric Sproles and Josh Avey – the role and value of the CHAT Framework in westwide management and planning.

9:00   Eric Sproles (WAFWA CHAT) – The goals of the Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT), how states retain control of their data, and how CHAT provides relevant spatial data while obscuring spatial detail.

9:15   Eric Sproles - What aspects of the existing GPS data and models for mule deer and other wildlife would be most relevant and beneficial to incorporate into CHAT?

9:45   What other species do we have relevant data for, and which would be most useful?

10:00   Break

10:15   Eric Sproles and Josh Avey - How can the WAFWA community work towards the goal of GPS locations being incorporated in CHAT? How can these discussions be facilitated within your own agency and with WAFWA Directors?

10:45   Eric Sproles - What actions can states take to incorporate these types of geospatial data in their decision making and planning? How can WAFWA best facilitate this implementation?

11:15   Eric Sproles - How can the wildlife community improve conversations about the importance of wildlife corridors with the general public? How can maps, geospatial data, and the CHAT Framework be used to support these types of conversations?

12:00   **Adjourn**