

***Wildfowl* Special Issue No. 4: Preface**

This special issue of *Wildfowl* is the proceedings from the 6th North American Duck Symposium and Workshop (NADS). Archives of NADS 1–5 are filed at <http://www.northamericanducksymposium.org/index.cfm?page=home>. Because this special issue is the first NADS proceedings to be published in a scientific journal, a brief history of NADS seemed warranted, given that relatively little has been documented on the development of NADS to date. Additionally, this preface reports the goals and themes of NADS 6, the contents of the symposium, and acknowledges people who aided or sponsored NADS 6 and this special issue.

Being inspired by the North American Arctic Goose Conference in the 1990s, the conceptual founders of NADS – Alan Afton of the Louisiana Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and Robert Helm of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries – envisioned a periodic forum (*c.* every three years) for waterfowl biologists, managers, researchers, conservationists and especially students to present and discuss current research and management related to ducks worldwide but with an emphasis on North America. They and particularly Dave Ankney, Michael Johnson and Bob McLandress pioneered NADS. Collectively, they believed that research questions and management issues related to sustaining duck populations and maintaining wildfowling traditions and ecological study of the birds in North America were of paramount importance. Moreover, they believed that waterfowl ecologists were among leaders in avian research and sought to ensure that this legacy was perpetuated, in part by creating a venue for discussion of topics significant to waterfowl and their habitats. Therefore, NADS was established in 1997 as an independent meeting free of agency and organisational politics and charged the scientific and local organisational committee of each subsequent symposium with authority to ensure that no group could use the forum for promoting personal agendas without consideration of either alternative viewpoints or scientific-based resolutions to management or other issues. In 2009, NADS, Inc. was created to formalise the organisation, obtain non-profit status, and ensure that NADS continued in perpetuity. The primary mission of NADS, Inc. is to advance the science, management and outreach that guide waterfowl conservation in North America and beyond by convening symposia at regular intervals to present and discuss information related to ducks and other waterfowl. The stated vision of NADS, Inc. is that well-trained and informed educators, researchers and managers will promulgate effective strategies to sustain duck habitats and populations for scientific study, wildfowling, observation, ecosystem services and conservation, and other ecological and societal benefits.

Six NADS have convened since inception: NADS 1 at Baton Rouge, Louisiana (1997); 2 at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (2000); 3 at Sacramento, California (2003); 4 at Bismarck, North Dakota, (2006); 5 at Toronto, Ontario, (2009); and 6 at Memphis, Tennessee (2013). NADS 7 is planned for February 2016 in Annapolis, Maryland, the first NADS to assemble in the

Atlantic Flyway. When possible, symposium locations were alternated between the United States and Canada and among Flyways in North America.

The NADS 6 organisational committee and the board of directors of NADS, Inc. agreed in 2009 at NADS 5 that NADS 6 would include all taxa of Anatidae (*i.e.* ducks, geese and swans). Thus, the scientific committee dubbed NADS 6 as “Ecology and Conservation of North American Waterfowl (ECNAW)”. Consistent with this taxonomic expansion to all waterfowl, the committee invited the North American Arctic Goose Conference and the International Sea Duck Conference as joint partners of NADS 6/ECNAW (<http://www.northamericanducksymposium.org/>).

In 2010, a 20-member scientific planning committee was formed with representation from universities, agencies and organisations across North America and Europe with expertise in ecology and conservation of ducks, geese and swans (<http://www.northamericanducksymposium.org/index.cfm?page=committees>). Richard M. Kaminski and J. Brian Davis (both of Mississippi State University) served as co-chairs for local planning, fund raising and logistics of NADS 6/ECNAW, hosting the event at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee, from 27–31 January 2013. A total of 450 conferees attended NADS 6/ECNAW, and a majority of those attending responded to a survey to evaluate the symposium (see Laborde *et al.* 2014 in this volume). The grand theme for NADS 6/ECNAW was “Science and Conservation: Sustaining Waterfowl Forever.” Although this theme may seem grandiose, it provided an ageless, challenging and inspiring goal for waterfowl scientists and stewards presently and into the future.

The scientific committee’s first challenge was to identify broad, prominent topics for plenary sessions consistent with the mission of NADS. By vote, the committee selected the following topics in sequential order occurring Monday–Thursday (28–31 January 2013) of the symposium: 1) habitat use and selection; 2) annual-cycle and biological carry-over effects; 3) life-history strategies and fitness; and 4) population and community ecology and dynamics. These topics were chosen because the committee believed use of habitats and intrinsic resources by waterfowl, relative to myriad exogenous influences, shape annual-cycle and life-history adaptations of individuals and ultimately influence biological outcomes for individuals, populations and communities. Leaders of the plenary sessions were also selected by vote; they and invited presenters represented colleagues with worldwide reputations in the topical areas of the plenaries.

In addition to the morning plenary sessions, afternoons of the symposium were filled with concurrent contributed and special sessions wherein professionals and students made oral presentations. There were numerous presentations that spanned theoretical and applied ecology and conservation of waterfowl and wetlands in North America and Europe. Abstracts from presentations are archived at <http://www.northamericanducksymposium.org/index.cfm?page=agenda>. The final afternoon of the symposium included a novel “Syntheses and Futures” session wherein senior and junior colleagues presented thoughts on major issues revealed during the symposium and visions for future research and conservation to sustain and

advance science and conservation of northern hemispheric waterfowl. Many of these progressive notions are presented in the articles in this special issue. Moreover, there were two evening poster sessions and a special session for student mentees to meet and interact with professionals. A special session of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan 2012 (NAWMP) also convened before the official opening of the symposium to discuss implementation and advancement of the revised plan (<http://nawmprevision.org/>). A synthesis paper of NAWMP 2012 is included in this volume (see Humburg & Anderson 2014).

From the wide array of presentations, the scientific committee deliberated and concluded that this volume would be composed of manuscripts from plenary and special sessions of the symposium. As mentioned, the committee selected broad topics for plenary sessions because of their fundamental importance to individual survival, reproductive performance and fitness, as well as how individual biological outcomes impact collectively on vital rates, population dynamics and community ecology of waterfowl. Indeed, this sequential acquisition of knowledge from individual to population and community levels is essential for holistic understanding of waterfowl ecology and guiding effective management and conservation for abundant and rare species, populations, and communities of waterfowl worldwide. Additionally, the committee did not envision the proceedings to be a mere compilation of selected “souvenir” papers from NADS 6/ECNAW but a contemporary compendium of knowledge related to waterfowl and their habitats in the northern hemisphere. Not since 1987 (in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada), have scientists, students and managers of waterfowl assembled for an international symposium focused on all waterfowl. The Winnipeg symposium was followed by a seminal publication entitled “*Ecology and Management of Breeding Waterfowl*” (Batt *et al.* 1992, University of Minnesota Press), which synthesised knowledge of breeding waterfowl ecology and management from the 20th century. Since this conference and publication, ecologists have greatly advanced understanding of waterfowl ecology and conservation throughout the birds’ annual cycle and range in the northern hemisphere (*e.g.* Baldassarre & Bolen 2006 in “*Waterfowl Ecology and Management*”, Krieger Publishing Company; Rees *et al.* 2009, *Wildfowl* Special Issue 3; and Baldassarre 2014 in “*Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America*”, The John Hopkins University Press). Thus, NADS 6/ECNAW served as a cornerstone for this special issue with its own primary goals: 1) synthesising classical and contemporary information related to waterfowl ecology and conservation throughout the northern hemisphere and the birds’ annual cycle and range; 2) comparing this knowledge across taxa of Anatidae with diverse habitat use, annual ecologies and cross-seasonal carry-over effects, life-history traits and fitness strategies, and population and community ecologies, for the purpose of archiving current knowledge from species to communities and enabling cross-taxa generalisations; and 3) using science-based information from the first two initiatives to adapt and advance local, regional, and intra- and intercontinental management and conservation of waterfowl (*e.g.* NAWMP 2012). Fulfilment of these goals, coupled with presentation here of papers from special sessions at NADS 6/ECNAW, are intended to make significant contributions toward understanding and sustaining northern hemispheric

waterfowl and other migratory birds during and after the 21st century. Moreover, because ecologists studying waterfowl have contributed greatly to understanding the ecology of migratory avifauna since the 20th century, this special issue should be useful to ornithologists in general and provide a 21st century standard for guiding and advancing science and conservation for waterfowl and other migratory birds and their habitats in the northern hemisphere. Indeed, we hope our mission has been accomplished.

Clearly, our mission would not have been successful without the dedicated efforts of all leaders of the plenary and special sessions and especially the authors contributing manuscripts to this special issue of *Wildfowl*, the 20-member scientific planning committee for NADS 6/ECNAW, the co-editors of this volume (Eileen Rees, Rick Kaminski and Lisa Webb), the editorial committee (Brian Davis, Mike Eichholz, Gary Hepp, Rick Kaminski, Dave Koons, Tom Nudds, Jim Sedinger and Lisa Webb), the many external peer reviewers of manuscripts, Bruce Batt for penning the Foreword, Jeanne Jones for drawing the logo for NADS 6/ECNAW, the local logistics committee for the symposium (Amy Alford, Bruce Batt, Karen Brasher, J. Brian Davis, Jim Feaga, Justyn Foth, Charlise Halford, Steve Jones of the Mississippi State University Extension Service, Rick and Loretta Kaminski, Molly Kneee, Jennifer Kross, Joe Lancaster, Joe Marty, Kira Newcomb, Tom Peterson, Jessica Myers, Jessie Schmidt, Clay Shipes, Jake Straub, Lisa Webb and Matt Weegman), Laurie Grace and Justyn Foth for designing and producing wood plaques for student presentation award recipients, session moderators, student poster and oral presentation award judges, student organisers of the mentor/mentee session (Elizabeth St. James, Justyn Foth, Jessi Tapp, David Messmer, Matt and Mitch Weegman), the student mentors, vendors, and the Peabody Hotel staff – especially Shannon Williams and Betsy Wilson. We also sincerely thank Eileen Rees (Editor-in-Chief of *Wildfowl*) and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust for accepting our request to publish the proceedings in *Wildfowl*, and her editorial staff for reviewing and editing the manuscripts herein. Moreover, we thank the NADS, Inc. Board of Directors who assisted with and supported NADS 6/ECNAW (Brian Davis, John Eadie, Michael Johnson, Rick Kaminski, Tom Nudds, Scott Petrie, Ron Reynolds, Mike Szymanski and Dan Yparraguirre). Rick Kaminski extends sincere thanks to George Hopper, Dean and Director of the College of Forest Resources and the Forest & Wildlife Research Center, Mississippi State University, for providing fiscal and moral support before, during, and after the symposium and for allowing him time to focus work on completion of this special issue.

Lastly but not least, we are deeply indebted to the sponsors and conferees who defrayed costs of NADS 6/ECNAW and publication of this special issue (see sponsors' logo page). This international, premiere symposium and publication are due largely to your support. If we have omitted anyone deserving acknowledgment, we accept full responsibility for the non-intentional oversight and extend our sincere thanks to you now.

Rick Kaminski & Brian Davis
(Local co-organisers of NADS 6/ECNAW)