

Watchable Wildlife Conference

The 2007 Watchable Wildlife Conference took place in Tucson on October 3-5. (<http://www.watchablewildlife.org/conference/>) The conference, co-sponsored by Arizona Game and Fish, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, and Pima County, among others, focused on community development of educational and economic opportunities related to wildlife watching, revenue sources for wildlife management and habitat conservation agencies, and using technology to enhance wildlife viewing experiences.

Meg Buchanan attended the conference as AWF's representative and participated in sessions on survey data related to outdoor recreational activities and values, using wildlife viewer purchase of Duck Stamps to enhance funding for purchase of habitat, efforts to counter the decline of outdoor activity by children, and managing the conflict over wolf reintroduction near Yellowstone Park.

A highlight of the conference was the presentation of results from the new U.S. Fish & Wildlife National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (<http://federalasst.fws.gov/surveys/surveys.html>), which showed a continuing flattening of participation in fishing and hunting and increasing numbers of respondents indicating participation in wildlife viewing, especially close to home. Survey results have been controversial and should be carefully interpreted. Responses to one survey question showed that those who did enjoy hunting or fishing were more likely to also enjoy wildlife watching than were non-hunters/fishers.