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NNSS biologist team one of three Presidential Award finalists

Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds presents national federal stewardship award annually

NORTH LAS VEGAS, Nevada – A submission by NNSS Biologists Derek Hall and Jeanette Perry—titled “Burrowing Owl and Winter Raptor Monitoring on the Nevada National Security Site”—has been named one of just three finalists for the Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds’ [Presidential Awards](#).

“I was aware of these awards and thought, ‘Let’s give it a shot,’” said Hall, who’s “studied everything from mosquitos to mountain lions” since joining the NNSS in 1994.

As the NNSS moves forward on vitally important mission work in the areas of stockpile stewardship and nuclear nonproliferation, among others, it’s the NNSS’ biologists who—with an eye toward environmental impact—help lay the groundwork. Before any new project begins at the Site, NNSS biologists do a survey to determine what could be impacted and how to mitigate the loss of important plant and wildlife resources.

“We’ve been doing some great work for many years,” Hall said. “It’s nice to receive some national recognition for our findings.”

Recognizing federal stewardship and migratory bird conservation projects from throughout the United States, the awards will take place virtually at a currently undetermined date in 2021.

The NNSS’ submission includes two studies: burrowing owls and winter raptors.

The burrowing owls portion of the NNSS’ submission builds upon research that began on the NNSS as early as 1995 and included food habits, burrow use, reproduction and activity patterns—all information that allows the NNSS to identify the disturbance impact of proposed work—and, later, migratory linkages. In 2018, the NNSS became aware of a new industry technology, tracking owls with satellites. Wanting to know where the Site’s burrowing owls wintered, Hall in June 2019 equipped seven owls with satellite-trackable transmitter, each powered by a tiny solar panel. Learn more by clicking [here](#).

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The winter raptor portion of the study lays the foundation for learning about climate change through studying bird migratory habits. Biologists currently hypothesize that as the earth continues to warm, an increasing number of southern birds will be seen in northern areas to which they never previously would have migrated. The NNSS partnered with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) starting in 2014 to build upon work NDOW had already been doing throughout the state since 1994—originally begun with the intent to study declining raptor populations. The interagency collaboration has yielded good data and established two new survey routes in an area with little known data due its inaccessibility to the public. Learn more by clicking [here](#).

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For more information on the NNSS, visit www.nnss.gov.

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