

# DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

## Canadian Section - 2014

*The **Wildlife Society Distinguished Service Award** recognizes TWS members who have made a long-term commitment to the Society based on at least 20 years of membership and their actions to further the mission of the Society. The member is someone who is/was “always there” and could be counted on to serve the chapter, section, or international organization.*



Credit: Alberta Fish & Wildlife

### **George Mitchell** **Professor Emeritus - University of Regina**

Dr. Mitchell was a pioneer in the wildlife field in western Canada, establishing a distinguished career in wildlife science and management in Alberta and Saskatchewan. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the University of British Columbia by 1952 and a PhD at Washington State University in 1962. Hired in 1952 as the first wildlife biologist for the province of Alberta, George immediately undertook to bring a more scientific approach to game management at a time when wildlife conservation was based totally on the subjective observations of hunters, naturalists and unpaid game guardians. With his exceptional people skills and dedication to designing and initiating new more effective field programs, George and his early co-workers introduced a more scientific approach and modernized game management in Alberta. In 1966, he was hired as an Associate Professor at the University of Regina where he remained for the rest of his professional career. Sensing his passionate love and understanding of wild plants and animals, George's students loved him. He inspired them to a lifetime commitment in their own pursuits of a career in biology. During his career he wrote his major opus on the Pronghorn Antelope in Alberta published in 1980. George formed the student chapter of TWS at the University of Regina in 1970, the first in western Canada. This chapter persisted until 1990 and members actively participated in the Central Mountains and Plains Section. George Mitchell worked hard to represent Canadian wildlifers in The Wildlife Society during the 1970s and 1980s. He was the first Canadian to sit as Canadian Member-at-Large and as ex officio member of the Canadian Concerns Committee, a committee struck in 1978 to look at how Canadians could be formally included structurally as part of The Wildlife Society. Dr. Mitchell actively participated in forming components of The Wildlife Society in Canada.