

International Relations Committee - Report

Meeting of March 29, 2018

Bob Broscheid (Colorado), Co-Chair

Travis Ripley (Alberta), Co-Chair

Meeting convened from 10:00 am to 11:45 pm, chaired by Bob Broscheid. Of the 16 participants in attendance, 8 were current Committee members or their proxies.

SCHEDULED DISCUSSION ITEMS:

2017/2018 Committee Work Plan

Deb Hahn

The International Relations Committee charge is as follows.

- Develop Association positions on all appropriate international matters including agreements, treaties, conventions, regulations and initiatives such as IUCN and its specialists groups and especially on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Further Canadian and Mexican involvement, develop relations with Central and South American and Caribbean nations, and explore contact with other nations across the globe.
- Monitor and participate as needed in the relevant Conventions, agreements and treaties such as the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, The Convention on Biological Diversity, The Ramsar Convention, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, etc.
- Serves as AFWA's source, sounding board and integrator of information and discussion about international issues.

The Committee reviewed the Charge and the Work Plan. They also acknowledged that the Committee's National Conservation Need scored highly again this year.

Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee

Travis Ripley

The Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee (CWDC) report highlighted the national wildlife health strategy, species at risk, and indigenous involvement. CWDC is updating the former National Wildlife Disease Strategy. The new (draft) *National Approach to Wildlife Health in Canada* will support strong, shared leadership to protect and promote wildlife health and the values it brings Canadians. The *Approach* was developed to address three principle challenges.

1. How to anticipate emerging and changing threats from globalization, climate change, landscape changes and other factors before conservation, public health, agriculture or other social values are harmed.
2. How, across a very large country, to provide Canadians and trading partners assurances on the disease status of wildlife to enable trade and on the safe use of wildlife as food, for recreational purposes, and in cultural practices.
3. How to assess, monitor and manage wildlife health across agencies and jurisdictions in a more effective and cost-efficient manner.

Recent efforts in Canada focus on developing and implementing multi-species responsive recovery strategies at an ecosystem level, rather than through a species by species approach. These efforts still recognize single species needs when necessary. The development of a common federal, provincial, territorial framework and criteria will use the best available science, traditional Indigenous knowledge and previous lessons learned, with consideration of:

- significant numbers of species at risk and high biodiversity values;
- conservation urgency for immediate and near-term action;
- biologically and technically feasible to improve conservation outcomes;
- build on and leverage existing partnerships;
- individual species at risk concern which requires species-specific action; and
- there are opportunities to address other government priorities (e.g. economic development) and optimize outcomes across multiple objectives.

There is a growing importance of Indigenous involvement/perspectives/leadership in a variety of areas, including conservation of biodiversity in Canada. It is a new relationship for government conservation agencies and NGOs, and as things develop, the conservation elements of the relationship might well be overwhelmed/influenced by other elements outside of fish and wildlife rights (e.g. health care, education, infrastructure). However, wildlife conservation in the northern parts of Canada are more advanced in this regard as a result of land claims and other agreements. Much of the new relationship building will occur in the provinces and in the federal government. Recent examples of this newer approach to inclusion include the updated Federal Fisheries Act (Bill C-68) that specifically makes references to incorporation of Indigenous governing bodies within the decision matrix for the federal Fisheries Minister to consider.

CITES Technical Work Group Update

Rick Jacobson, Jim deVos, Carolyn Caldwell, Buddy Baker

Buddy Baker, (Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries), Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative), Jim deVos (Arizona Game and Fish Department), Rick Jacobson (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) and Deb Hahn (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) will represent the state fish and wildlife agencies and where applicable the provinces and territories at the 30th Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Animals Committee meeting from 16-20 July, 2018 and the Joint Meeting held with the 23rd Plants Committee on July 21st. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) started soliciting input on species proposals, and resolutions and decisions for the 2019 CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) via federal register notices. The Technical Work Group will be reaching out to ask for information and input to inform positions. Currently the Technical Work Group is participating in intersessional working groups on American eel, development of an updated CITES vision, Appendix III species, and traceability of trade specimens.

Update on Activities of the USFWS Office of International Affairs

Gloria Bell, USFWS Deputy Assistant Director International Affairs (provided a written update)

International Wildlife Conservation Council: In November 2017, the Department of Interior published a notice in the Federal Register announcing establishment of the International Wildlife Conservation Council (Council or IWCC). Per the notice and the Council's charter, the Council will provide advice to the Federal Government, through the Secretary of the Interior, on increasing public awareness domestically regarding conservation, wildlife law enforcement, and economic benefits that result from U.S. citizens traveling to foreign nations to engage in hunting. Additionally, the Council shall advise the Secretary on the benefits international hunting has on foreign wildlife and habitat conservation, anti-poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking programs, and other ways in which international hunting

benefits human populations in these areas. Through the Federal Register notice, the Department received nominations for membership on the Council. The Department selected 16 people to serve on the Council, leaving two seats vacant. The Council's first meeting was held on March 16, 2018. The meeting included presentations by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on its international conservation activities, including the Multinational Species Conservation Funds and other financial and technical assistance, on-going efforts to outline a new International Wildlife Conservation Strategy, the roles and functions of the Office of Law Enforcement, and the larger U.S. Government effort to combat wildlife trafficking. The Council selected a chair (former Congressman Bill Brewster), and created subcommittees on conservation, combating wildlife trafficking, and policy. A second meeting has not yet been scheduled.

International Wildlife Conservation Strategic Plan: The Service recently launched an effort to develop a holistic international wildlife conservation strategy that will lead to an enduring vision that defines the Service's niche in international conservation; strengthens cooperation with partners and stakeholders; and leverages additional support for international wildlife conservation priorities. Through this comprehensive effort, we will articulate the ways in which the Service engages in international conservation, document our legal mandates, and engage external stakeholders and provide opportunities for feedback. We intend to finalize this strategy in the fall of 2018. In the end, we hope to have a strategy that will not only guide international conservation efforts for this administration, but that will provide the basis for the Service's delivery of measurable, meaningful conservation achievements for decades to come.

Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management: The Committee was created by the wildlife agencies of Canada and the United States, and by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico (SEMARNAT) in 1995 to address priorities of continental significance and enhance concerted efforts towards the conservation and management of the unique biological resources shared by the three countries. Last year's Trilateral Committee annual meeting was hosted in Ensenada, Mexico, during May 15-19, and attracted more than 130 experts from over 30 agencies of the three countries. The working tables held sessions throughout the week and addressed a broad array of issues. Participants had the opportunity to join discussions at the following working tables: Executive, CITES, Ecosystem Conservation, Law Enforcement, Migratory Birds, and Shared Species of Common Conservation Concern. This year, the annual meeting of the Trilateral Committee will take place in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, at the Service's National Conservation Training Center during April 9-12. The participants will attend working tables of interest and a plenary session on Grasslands Conservation, and learn about the strategic direction of Trilateral Committee.

CITES CoP18: The Service has already initiated its preparations for the 18th Meeting of the CITES Conference of Parties, which is scheduled for May 2019 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Service's first Federal Register notice, calling on the public to provide recommendations regarding species proposals, had a public comment period that closed on March 26. Its second notice, calling on the public to provide recommendations on resolutions, decisions and other agenda items, was published on March 12 and has a 60-day public comment period. These notices will be followed by additional notices regarding what the United States is considering submitting for consideration at CoP18, as well as an opportunity to provide input on the tentative U.S. negotiating positions for entire agenda. The Service will also hold a public meeting in advance of CoP18.

Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) Project: The CEC funded a project titled, "Supporting Sustainable Trade of CITES Species" (<http://www.cec.org/our-work/projects/supporting-sustainable-trade-cites-species>). This is a tri-national initiative among the governments of the United States, Canada, and Mexico to support sustainable trade of CITES species in the North American region. In August 2017, the CEC Council approved funding for a second phase of this project that will

implement actions identified in the Action Plans for turtles, sharks, tarantulas, and timber. The Service is represented by the International Affairs Program's Divisions of Management Authority and Scientific Authority and the Office of Law Enforcement on the Project's Steering Committee.

In September 2017, the CEC hosted a project planning workshop that brought together the project's Steering Committee to identify the priority activities to advance implementation of the action plans. The Steering Committee prioritized 17 of the 70 recommended actions in the action plans. Seven of these 17 recommendations call for species workshops to be held over the next two years.

The first three-day tri-national workshop, focused on trade and identification of CITES-listed tarantulas, was held during Feb. 26 – Mar. 2, 2018, in Guadalajara, Mexico. The workshop provided identification training on 16 tarantula species, built links among North America enforcement authorities to combat trafficking in these species, and stimulated collaborative conservation actions to ensure legal, sustainable and traceable trade.

Due to budget and timeline constraints, the Steering Committee is currently re-evaluating the project's priorities as all work must be now completed by December 2018. Most likely, the proposed timber workshop and other efforts for timber species will be cancelled. Two shark workshops are anticipated to be held this summer (an identification workshop that Canada will host and a Regional CITES shark workshop hosted by Mexico), and a freshwater turtle and tortoise workshop is likely for fall 2018 and may be hosted by the United States.

Ramsar Convention: The Service and the U.S. Department of State, co-administrators of the Ramsar Convention, have undertaken an internal review of the domestic Ramsar portfolio, with some significant changes expected. The Service seeks to strengthen domestic implementation of the convention, coordinating with States to emphasize recreation, job creation, and conservation in U.S. wetlands. To codify these commitments, a federal interagency team is developing U.S.-specific criteria for the Ramsar convention. Once a rough draft has been produced, we will coordinate with AFWA and other partners on the draft criteria.

Promoting Sustainable Use in the Western Hemisphere

Deb Hahn

At the September Committee meeting, the Committee discussed a concept from Texas Parks and Wildlife to help promote sustainable use principles in countries in the Western Hemisphere via technical exchanges. The Committee supported the concept and finalized a document sharing information on the concept. At this meeting, the Committee expressed its endorsement of the concept, recognized that some states already participate in and support technical exchanges with other countries such as Mexico and Peru, and would like to see more states to consider technical exchanges of the type presented in the concept document.

International Program USFS Report

Greg Butcher

Greg is the Migratory Species Coordinator for the USFS. They have partnerships across the hemisphere for species in decline. They also participate in Hemispheric partnerships and discussions that advance migratory species conservation. The Migratory Bird Table of the Trilateral Committee recommended the development of a Hemispheric vision for birds in the Americas. The Convention of Migratory Species created the Americas Flyways Framework and a task force to help implement it. Partners are considering how partners in North America can work together through the task force to enhance the effectiveness of shared migratory bird conservation goals. The US NABCI Committee has an

International Committee. Partners in Flight sponsored an international meeting in November 2017. They also created a species assessment that has been conducted in North and Central America. The species assessment is now being conducted in the Caribbean. An important discussion is the conservation of grasslands not only in North America but also in the Southern Cone of Southern America. They participated in the development of the Pacific and Atlantic Flyway shorebird investment strategies. They also work with partners to conserve Pine-oak forest in Mexico and Central America, hummingbirds through the Western Hummingbird Partnership, and monarch butterflies through the Monarch Joint Venture.

International Relations Director Updates

Deb Hahn

The International Relations Director provided updates on some aspects of her portfolio as they relate to the Committee's Work Plan. They include updates on Southern Wings, Ramsar Convention, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the WildEarth Guardians lawsuit, the status of the Joint Management Committee on humane trapping standards, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). She also provided an update on the US/Mexico Border Governors Wildlife Table Partnership that was submitted by Maria Araujo, Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Southern Wings facilitates state fish and wildlife agencies participation in the conservation of shared priority migratory birds with partners throughout the Hemisphere. Since 2009, thirty state fish and wildlife agencies have provided \$2.7 million U.S. dollars. All state contributions are matched at a minimum of 1:1 by non-state funds before supporting on-the-ground projects.

The Director is engaging the US State Department and other partners in planning and preparing for the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity 2018 Conference of the Parties. The Director will engage on the agenda for the upcoming IUCN Council meeting. She is also communicating with the Chair of the US IUCN National Committee to provide input on subcommittees membership and an agenda for the June meeting.

In 2016 WildEarth Guardians sued the USFWS in Montana District Court arguing that the USFWS did not appropriately consider the environmental impacts of the CITES furbearer export program pursuant to NEPA. The lawsuit specifically referenced export of bobcat, lynx, river otter, gray wolves, and brown bears. The USFWS developed a draft EA that received 600 public comments 552 in favor of their Finding of No Significant Impact. WildEarth Guardians then amended their complaint. The Center for Biological Diversity also sued. State agencies and AFWA were expecting to file an Amicus Brief but the state agencies were denied by the court. The lawsuit is continuing in typical fashion within the courts.

The European Union is next in line to host the next meeting of the Joint Management Committee of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards. There is no date set for a meeting.

US/Mexico Border Governors Wildlife Table Partnership - Since 2007, Safari Club International's (SCI) International Affairs and Development Committee has been supporting the Mexican game departments by encouraging them to promote their hunting opportunities at the SCI conventions. As in previous years, SCI invited the governors and wildlife directors of the ten Border states to the SCI convention in Las Vegas and provided complimentary convention registration, lodging and dinner. This year, a Hunt Mexico seminar was presented and three Mexican states bought convention booths. Other cooperative projects resulting from this partnership include the funding for two Mexican cadets to train in the Texas Game Warden Academy and funding for a professional development exchange program between Texas and wildlife personnel from Latin America.

Action Items / Resolutions / Motions

N/A

THREATS AND EMERGING ISSUES IDENTIFIED:

N/A

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

Submitted by Bob Broscheid and Travis Ripley

Committee Member Attendees:

Bob Broscheid, bob.broscheid@state.co.us

Jim deVos, jdevos@azgfd.gov

Matt Eckert, matthew.eckert@state.co.us

Rick Jacobson, rick.jacobson@ct.gov

Carolyn Caldwell, MAFWACITES@gmail.com

John Jackson, jjw-no@att.net

Angela Somma, angela.somma@noaa.gov

Greg Butcher, gsubtcher@fs.fed.us

Non-Committee Members Attendees:

Silke Neve, Silke.neve@canada.ca

Martin Mendoza, martin.mendoza@aphis.usda.gov

Debbie Spring, Deborah.spring@us.af.mil

Joshua Winchell, Joshua_winchell@fws.gov

Mike Fowlks, mikefowlks@utah.gov

Kurt Alt, kalt@wildsheepfoundation.org

Joe Goergen, jgoergen@safariclub.org