

International Relations Committee - Report

Meeting of September 19, 2022

Ryan Brown (Virginia), Co-chair

Travis Ripley (Alberta), Co-Chair

Meeting convened from 10:00am to 12:00pm CT. There were approximately 50 people in attendance over the course of the meeting, including 23 Committee members.

Dates of upcoming meetings:

- Ramsar Convention Conference of the Parties (CoP): November 5-13, 2022
- Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) 19th CoP: November 14-25, 2022
- Convention on Biological Diversity Open-ended Working Group (Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) negotiations): December 3-5, 2022
- CBD CoP: December 7-19, 2022

Committee Work Plan Review (Deb Hahn): We are in the process of finalizing the 2022-2023 committee work plan. A draft was shared with Committee members and with meeting attendees. It is available [here](#). You can provide comments and edits to Deb Hahn (dhahn@fishwildlife.org) by COB October 7th. The Committee also reviewed the charge and didn't have any changes. However, see the DEI discussion below for comments about the charge.

In September of 2020 and May of 2022, we had panel discussions to gather input on state, provincial, and territorial agencies, and partner priorities. Those discussions have and continue to inform our work and work plan. In the past year, the Committee and its members have engaged extensively in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Engagement in the Tri-lateral Wildlife Committee meeting, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), with partners via Southern Wings, and on One Health was also important. AFWA developed a position and recommendations for the negotiations of the GBF (See below for additional discussion). AFWA continued its engagement with the Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments to the CBD. We were extensively engaged in preparations for and negotiations at the IUCN World Conservation Congress and continue as a member of the IUCN U.S. National Committee's Executive Committee. Reviewing and commenting on the IPBES Sustainable Use Assessment for Policy Makers occurred in the spring of 2022. The 26th Trilateral Wildlife Committee meeting was hosted by Canada and held virtually from June 13 to June 16. The participants, which included state agency staff from New Mexico, Texas, Arizona and AFWA staff, engaged on migratory bird conservation, monarch butterfly conservation, wildlife health and zoonotic diseases, grassland conservation, Mexican wolf conservation, tri-national feral swine management, 30x30 and more. Each year the state agencies and AFWA produce a report that provides an overview of some of their international conservation work. The report can be found [here](#). Forty states have contributed over 3.5 million USD for on-the-ground conservation actions to support the conservation of state Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). The CITES Technical Work Group activities are summarized below and in the work plan.

Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee (Travis Ripley): The Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee (CWDC) is composed of the wildlife directors and agency leads representing the jurisdictions/agencies

(13 Provinces and Territories and Environment and Climate Change Canada, Parks Canada Agency, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada) with responsibility for wildlife conservation in Canada. The CWDC continues to be involved in a governance transformation within the context of working connections to a Ministers Council, supported by Deputy Ministers. Within the governance of the Council, three strategic level committees are being established to manage the flow information and decisions on wildlife and biodiversity across Canada. These include:

- Wildlife and Species Committee (previously called the CWDC): retains the same function and includes additional elements such as invasive alien species and wildlife health.
- Ecosystem Conservation and Management Committee
- Biodiversity Committee

Draft terms of reference and committee workplans are under development. The CWDC is tracking for full implementation in March 2023. This new structure will better manage the flow of national policy development and information flow among all provinces and territories. AFWA involvement, including the work of the International Relations Committee, will remain an integral component of the new structure, seen as one of the primary linkages with U.S. States on matters pertaining to wildlife.

CWDC has also recently discussed the North American Model (NAM) and the continued application of this model of wildlife management in Canada. Through the lens of reconciliation with First Nations, Metis and Inuit, the discussion centered on the work to “Indigenize” the NAM with indigenous knowledge. Further discussion considered the impact on the AFWA relevancy roadmap, and greater attention being invested in gaining Indigenous participation and leadership in biodiversity and conservation. These align with the One Health model of critical partnerships.

There is a focus on the Pan Canadian Approach to Species at Risk (SAR). Canadian Wildlife Service provided a comprehensive overview on the continued implementation of the priority species, priority places and priority sectors approach to SAR – first initiated almost 5 years ago. The commitments include significant investment over 5-10 years to enhance Nature Legacy commitments (\$2.3B over 5 years), Natural Climate Solutions (\$4B over 10 years) and expand the NatureSmart climate fund (\$780M over 5 years). These enhanced initiatives will work towards meaningful strengthened protection of species habitats and enhancing work related to Indigenous reconciliation.

Six priority species have been identified with a focus on caribou and bison and the development of conservation agreements. Eleven priority places have been highlighted across the country which further captures lower priority species from an ecosystem wide recovery perspective. The recent publication of Canada’s Wildlife Value Survey is permitting the CWDC to understand how these results may be incorporated into the management programs within each jurisdiction. For those who may not have seen those results, Canada is trending to be more mutualistic and pluralistic in peoples’ values of wildlife, with much fewer traditionalists when compared with the U.S. Moreover, when looking at how urbanization, income and education affect these values, Canada highlights a departure from what was anticipated. While the level of education is correlated with mutualism (with higher education demonstrating higher mutualism) like the US, both urbanization and income are the inverse, with provinces having more urbanization and income supporting lower proportion of mutualists. Another research study found that 75% of Canadians believe that protecting the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs.

We are also looking at opportunities at the provincial and territorial level related to One Health and coordination with AFWA’s One Health leadership opportunities. Lastly, the committee is embarking on a review of national policies related to the protection of species at risk and their habitat on non-federal lands. The cross-cutting policies that address imminent threats to species or critical habitat protections are top of mind as engagements continue over the next year.

CITES Technical Work Group Update (Buddy Baker, Scott Buchanan, Carolyn Caldwell, Stewart Liley): The CITES Technical Work Group (Team) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies and where applicable the Provinces and Territories at the 74th Standing Committee and on numerous CITES working groups. In February, the Team hosted a state fish and wildlife agency discussion on the conservation and management of freshwater turtles and tortoises as it relates to CITES and CITES listings. They hosted a follow up discussion on September 14th that included a discussion of the reptiles being proposed for listing at CITES and engaged the AFWA Amphibian and Reptile (A and R) Committee as well.

The CITES CoP will be held in Panama in November. The agenda items that may be of interest include zoonotic diseases and One Health, the CITES Strategic Vision, the conservation of amphibians, eels, seahorse, queen conch, and species listing proposals. The Team, in coordination with the A and R Committee and Kerry Wixted, gathered state-level management and conservation information for the native reptile species that have been recommended for listing in CITES by the U.S. government. That information and national and international trade data was provided to the USFWS through their Federal Register notices to inform their decisions and to development AFWA positions on the species listing proposals that the U.S. government advanced. The list of North American species recommended for listing in a CITES Appendix is [here](#). The CITES listing proposals can be downloaded [here](#). There are also overarching themes that will influence the discussions and decisions at CITES. They include the role and engagement of indigenous, local, and rural communities, One Health, and the ever increasing CITES workload and the impact that is having on the implementation of the convention.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, International Affairs Report (Bryan Arroyo, Assistant Director for International Affairs, USFWS): The U.S. submitted and/or co-sponsored 13 species proposals to amend the CITES Appendices and 3 Resolutions, 15 decisions, and 6 discussion documents. CoP19 species proposals and documents can be found on the CITES [website](#). The U.S. gave priority consideration to native species and species that the U.S. imports and/or exports in international trade in its proposal submissions. For resolutions, decisions, and other agenda items, the U.S. is proposing closing loopholes in captive breeding registrations, improving accessibility and implementation of humane live animal transport, and three species-specific documents that address illegal take and trade and CITES compliance. Currently, the U.S. is developing its negotiating positions on proposed resolutions, decisions, and amendments to the CITES Appendices (species proposals), as well as other agenda items that have been submitted by others. On August 22, 2022 we published a Federal Register Notice soliciting public comments on the items on the CoP provisional agenda, and announced a virtual public meeting to discuss the items on the provisional agenda. The public meeting was held on September 6, 2022 and the comment period closed on September 21, 2022. We much appreciate your engagement in this important, transparent process that informs our decision makers in the development of our positions at CoP19. Our CITES CoP19 Head of Delegation is Matt Strickland. USFWS Director, Martha Williams will also be part of our delegation. During the CoP, the U.S. delegation is pleased to host informational briefings for the U.S. participants attending the CoP.

On the international conservation side of international affairs, we continue to make progress in our grant making processes and implementing safeguards on human rights. We have embarked on an evidence-based decision making analysis unparalleled in the USFWS. We have taken 20 years' worth of grant data and analyzed the effectiveness or success of those actions in achieving the conservation goals. We have an impressive analysis that can predict grant proposals potential effectiveness based on our experience. I plan to expand it to the entire program in the next few years. USFWS is working with Canada and Mexico to prepare for the 2024 Trilateral Committee Meeting. This year's meeting will be hosted by Mexico and will likely occur in May/June, 2023. USFWS released a Notice of Funding Opportunity in the Spring 2023 and funded \$1.8M in grants for wildlife and habitat conservation in

Mexico, Central America and South America. Budget will be our struggle as we are the smallest operational budget on the USFWS.

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Update

(Doug Beard, USGS): The presentation is available [here](#). The USGS is the focal point for IPBES. The IPBES Assessment on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species Summary for Policy Makers was approved at the IPBES CoP in July 2022. The summary is available [here](#). You can read the media release that highlights some of the main messages [here](#). 50,000 wild species meet the needs of billions of people worldwide. The Assessment offer options to ensure the use is sustainable. With one of five people relying on wild species for income and food it is critical that the uses be sustainable. The assessment describes the diverse set of uses and the associated practices such as fishing, gathering, and harvesting. It explores how these uses relate to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and assesses the status and trends of the use of wild species. It also identifies policy options and enabling conditions for sustainable use from national to global scales. Lastly, it provides 7 key elements and policy options to strengthen the sustainable use of wild species. The report will contribute to the development of the GBF, inform CITES decisions, and help implement the SDGs. AFWA will engage with USGS to see about developing key messages for the states, provinces and territories. The messages will also help inform and strengthen our CITES and CBD positions and recommendations. The other assessment that was approved in July was the thematic assessment on values, which will also be interesting to consider. In the fall, IPBES will be looking for reviewers of an assessment on invasive species. Another assessment will relate to biodiversity and business.

Outcomes of and Prep for the CBD meetings/Edinburgh Declaration Follow Up (Deb Hahn, AFWA):

The Open-ended Working Group is responsible for developing the GBF for adoption at the December CBD CoP. The GBF text negotiations were conducted in March and June. The current GBF text includes mostly bracketed text. Bracketed text has not yet been agreed to. Therefore, there will be much work to do leading up to and at the Working Group meeting in December. AFWA will update our recommendations and participate in the meetings. We will solicit input from the Committee. The GBF Co-chairs draft recommendations of the [Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) and the [Edinburgh Declaration](#) are available for download. The Committee has considered whether AFWA should sign the Edinburgh Declaration since 2020. In 2021, the interim decision on whether AFWA should sign the Edinburgh Declaration was postponed because Committee members wanted to see a final copy of the GBF and to find out what the U.S. Government thought about the Edinburgh Declaration. Since that time, we engaged the U.S. State Department. They do not have any concerns about the Declaration or AFWA signing it. However, the GBF remains in draft form. The intent is to conduct final negotiations on the text of the GBF and approve it at the CBD CoP in December 2022. With many unknowns about the final text of the GBF and considering the input received over the past two years on whether AFWA should sign the Edinburgh Declaration, the co-chairs of the International Relations Committee recommend that AFWA does not sign the Edinburgh Declaration. A committee briefing document on the Edinburgh Declaration can be found [here](#).

IUCN's Hunting Situation Analysis and Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group (Shane

Mahoney, Conservation Visions): The IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organizations. IUCN's over 1,400 Member organizations include States and government agencies – including AFWA - at the national and subnational levels, NGOs large and small, Indigenous peoples' Organizations, scientific and academic institutions, and business associations from over 160 countries. IUCN's Members, expert Commissions and Secretariat work together in a combined effort to conserve nature and accelerate the transition to sustainable development. IUCN Member organizations set the direction of the Union's work, and global conservation efforts more broadly, every four years at the IUCN World Conservation Congress. State

and government agency members like AFWA make up approximately 14% of IUCN's Membership, affording them a unique platform to collaborate with subnational governments and civil society organizations to advance their conservation objectives. International and national non-governmental organizations form the largest and most diverse category of IUCN membership. In 2016, IUCN Members voted to create a new category of IUCN membership for Indigenous Peoples' Organizations. In September 2021, IUCN Members voted to create a new category for local governments.

The IUCN Secretariat works to achieve the vision of the Union's membership. It includes around 1,000 staff in over 160 countries. IUCN provides public, private and non-governmental organizations with the knowledge, tools and projects that enable societies, economies and nature to thrive together. These include data, assessments and analysis, trusted standards, neutral convening fora, and capacity-building resources. IUCN sets conservation priorities through a unique multi-stakeholder decision-making process resulting in policies and decisions that guide the development and promotion of recommendations to governments, and global conservation standards and policies. These outcomes are IUCN's Resolutions and Recommendations.

IUCN engages in and influences international agreements that are relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of nature and natural resources. The most widely-used IUCN standards include the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, the Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas, the Guidelines for Applying Protected area Management Categories, and the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions. Areas where IUCN works include biodiversity conservation, business, finance and economics, climate change, freshwater and water security, governance - law and rights - Nature-based Solutions, ocean and coasts, and protected areas and land use. To effectively engage these broad themes, IUCN's Commissions create Specialist Groups comprised of volunteer experts led by an SG Chair who is appointed to carry out long-term activities on behalf of the Commission.

The IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group (SULi) is a global volunteer network formed by the IUCN in 2012, as a joint initiative of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP). SULi aims to mobilize global expertise across the science, policy and practice sectors to address the urgent challenges of overexploitation of wild species and to support and promote robust, ecologically sound and socially equitable models of wildlife use that are sustainable, but also meet human needs and priorities while conserving biodiversity. SULi seeks to influence conservation policy and decision-making so that it addresses and integrates human needs and is formed with the effective participation of local people who live close to (and are affected by) wildlife. SULi's work is founded on the recognition that conservation is more likely to be effective and lasting when contributing to the rights and well-being of people living with wildlife. Its Mission is to build global understanding of the importance of sustainable use of wild species, both for nature and for people, and to guide sound decision-making by generating and disseminating high quality, evidence-based information, tools and advice, that enhance legal, sustainable, equitable wildlife management practices and draw attention to those that are illegal, unsustainable and inequitable.

SULi is led by a Chair, currently Dilys Roe, who is assisted by a Deputy-Chair, Shane Mahoney, and a steering committee comprised of senior members from diverse geographical regions. Our work priorities include building strategic evidence, knowledge, and understanding on sustainable use and how to achieve it; raising awareness of the importance of incentives, rights, and sustainable use among broad conservation and development audiences; boosting community voices and local knowledge; and influencing practice and policy. SULi's efforts are facilitated by Regional Groups, which include Eastern and Southern Africa; West and Central Africa; East Europe, North & Central Asia; Asia;

Oceania; West Europe; Latin America & Caribbean; and North America; along with Thematic Working Groups, e.g., CITES, Plant Use, and Hunting, for example. SULi engages over 400 experts from around the globe with broad and interdisciplinary expertise. It connects and represents actors from the intergovernmental, government, academic, IGO, NGO, private sector, and IPLC sectors. It has its own convening power capacity and bridges two IUCN commissions. SULi is looking for and encouraging membership from North America (www.iucnsuli.org).

The current Wildlife Harvesting and Hunting Situation Analysis represents the evolution of an IUCN SULi-led project designed to contribute to the IUCN theme on biodiversity and advance specific SULi work priorities through the creation of a comprehensive, cutting-edge & independent evidence assessment which will explore the role of hunting, particularly trophy hunting, in conservation and wildlife management. Despite sustainable use of biological resources being one of the three foundational pillars of the Convention on Biodiversity, wildlife harvesting - and other forms of consumptive use of wildlife - attracts high levels of controversy. Hunting, in general, is one such controversial issue and, although it involves relatively few animals compared to many forms of wildlife harvesting, trophy hunting is a particularly high-profile topic where issues around land and wildlife conservation, animal rights and welfare, human development, human rights, media pressure and local and external viewpoints clash. The work now underway is intended to produce an IUCN-published "situation analysis" which will focus most directly on trophy hunting in Africa while set in a wider context of wildlife harvesting globally. The analysis will include country and regional case studies from around the world; a comprehensive review of the current state of *existing* published knowledge and evidence on the conservation, social and economic impacts of trophy hunting globally; *new* analyses to fill gaps in the current published evidence base, with a specific focus on Africa; and a commentary on ethical debates around trophy hunting and wildlife use.

Shane Mahoney is helping coordinate information on Situation Analysis effort for North America and emphasized to the committee the importance of ensuring that our unique circumstances - especially in relation to the successes and challenges of the North American Wildlife Model- and our specific concerns - are well-represented in the international discussions about hunting and wildlife conservation, in general; and especially in this high profile policy Situation Analysis forum. If we are not heard in international arenas, we run the risk of losing our collective voice and our influence on the international stage. This will certainly have negative consequences for North American sustainable use, wildlife management, and conservation.

Integrating DEI into the Work of the Committee (All): The Committee discussed 3 questions to help guide discussion. The Committee also solicited feedback on these questions in advance of the meeting via an anonymous survey.

1. What are some benefits of enhancing or integrating DEI efforts, specific to this committee's work? In other words, why is DEI important to this Committee?
 - a. More inclusive and equitable global biodiversity conservation conventions will be more successful and garner more buy-in.
 - b. The work will be more impactful if we bring in a greater diversity of ideas.
 - c. More diversity of thought brought to the challenges facing the conservation of biodiversity, climate adaptation etc. will help us be more successful.
 - d. Benefit from the lost opportunities that arise from missing perspectives inherent to others culture, race, ethnicity.
 - e. A more diverse committee will potentially make us more approachable by other countries and stakeholders to implement our charge.

- f. More perspectives result in more critical thinking and more potential solutions.
2. What would including DEI into the committee's work look like?
 - a. When developing positions use inclusive language.
 - b. When reviewing positions, resolutions, motions, and other documents from CITES, CBD, IUCN, CMS, IPBES, consider the impacts on the diversity of constituents that the state, provincial, and territorial agencies serve and whether the language used is inclusive.
 - c. Being intentional to make sure that all voices are heard.
 - d. Purposeful invitations
 - e. Being open to new ideas and different values related to nature and wildlife.
3. Are there commitments that the committee feels it can make in advance of the next meeting in Spring 2023?
 - a. Include a presentation from SEAFWA's MINRC committee on the next meeting agenda
 - b. Update the Charge to include DEI.
 - c. Consider how we engage with more voices at the next Committee meeting.
 - d. Communicate to AFWA that we encourage continued implementation of a hybrid meeting.
 - e. Work with AFWA to develop power point guidance that ensures accessibility and inclusivity.
 - f. Discuss with AFWA how we can make the meeting space more inclusive.
4. Other ideas for the future.
 - a. Develop a DEI toolkit that highlights future opportunities for committee improvement
 - b. Make purposeful invitations to seek unique perspectives or views on work products.
 - c. Ensure that any projects start with a true consideration and commitments to the local communities and have follow up to ensure those principles are adhered to.
 - d. Now and again consider a guest species from a local indigenous community.
 - e. Take some time to consider who is missing from the committee and the conversation?
 - f. Consider how we enhance our use of the virtual component to bring in new ideas and people.

Action Items / Resolutions / Motions

- The Committee will update the AFWA position on the GBF.
- Develop and share key messages from the IPBES Sustainable Use Assessment
- The Committee recommended that AFWA not sign the Edinburgh Declaration
- The Committee identified DEI actions to implement before the next meeting in March 2023.
 - Include a DEI-related presentation on the next meeting agenda
 - Update the Charge to include DEI.
 - Consider how we engage with more voices at the next Committee meeting.
 - Communicate to AFWA that we encourage continued implementation of a hybrid meeting.
 - Work with AFWA to develop power point guidance that ensures accessibility and inclusivity.
 - Discuss with AFWA how we can make the meeting space more inclusive.

OTHER ITEMS MENTIONED:

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

Submitted by Ryan Brown and Travis Ripley

Committee Member Attendees:

Travis Ripley, Alberta Fish and Wildlife Stewardship
Ryan Brown, Virginia Department of Wildlife Conservation
Stewart Liley, WAFWA CITES Representative
Buddy Baker, SEAFWA CITES Representative
Regina Lennox (on behalf of Jeremy Clare), Safari Club International
Scott Buchanan, NEAFWA CITES Representative
Carolyn Caldwell, MAFWA CITES Representative
John Jackson, Conservation Force
Bryan Arroyo, USFWS
Doug beard, USGS
Joe Goergen, Safari Club International Fund
Jacey Scott (for Cecilia Lougheed), Canadian Wildlife Service
Scott Buchanan, NEAFWA CITES Representative
Mike O'Brien, Fur Institute of Canada
Mike Ielmini, U.S. Forest Service
Will Dillman, South Carolina DNR
Gordon Batcheller, NEAFWA
Grant Burton, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission
Jennifer Sheehan, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
Sara Boario, USFWS Alaska
Angela Somma, NOAA
Catherine Semcer, Property and Environment Research Center

Non-Committee Members Attendees:

Shane Mahoney, Conservation Visions
Christie Curley, Ontario Natural Resources and Forestry
Dana Cole, USDA Wildlife Services
Craig Martin, USFWS FAC
Lisa Bragg, Southwick and Associates
Jennifer Goff, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission
Craig Johnson, Alberta Fish and Wildlife
Doug Chiasson, Fur Institute of Canada
Chandra Harvey, Wisconsin DNR
Jesus Franco, American Bird Conservancy/Rio Grande Joint Venture
Darin Moore, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
Hugh Hunt, Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee
Jerome Ford, USFWS Migratory Bird Program
John Jackson, Conservation Force
Joseph Goergen, Safari Club International Foundation
Junko Hoshi, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Kerry Wixted, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Mary Monteschio, State of New Jersey
Paul VanRyzin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tristan Breije, Hunter & Co.
Leslie Hay, U.S. Forest Service
Mischelle Diaz, Texas Parks and Wildlife
Dave Kostersky, DU Canada
Jim Heffelfinger, Arizona Game and Fish Department