

International Relations Committee - Report

Meeting of May 3, 2022
Travis Ripley (Alberta), Co-Chair
Vacant, Co-Chair

Meeting convened from 1:00pm to 3:00pm EDT. There were 46 people in attendance including 16 Committee members.

Dates of upcoming meetings:

- Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management (virtual, hosted by Canada): June 13-16, 2022
- Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) Open-Ended Working Group: June 21-26, 2022
- CBD Conference of the Parties (CoP): August/September 2022
- Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) 19th CoP: November 14-25, 2022

Discussion about CITES, CBD, and IUCN to Help Inform Committee Work

A heartfelt thank you to our speakers and colleagues for their time and expertise (Shane Mahoney, Conservation Visions; Colman O’Criodain, WWF International; Basile van Havre, Co-chair UN-CBD OEWG; Jeremy Clare, Safari Club International; Carolina Caceres, Canadian Wildlife Service; Rachel Lévesque, Government of Quebec). This was a continuation of a discussion the International Relations (IR) Committee had in September 2020. Each speaker spent about 5 minutes presenting a few priorities and thoughts on where the IR Committee could help facilitate collaboration on an issues or take steps to advance an issue in CITES, CBD, and IUCN. Some common priorities and issues came to light during the discussions.

CITES:

1. Support for continued engagement of Indigenous peoples and rural/local communities and the hope that more progress will be made on this topic.
2. Concerns about the scope of CITES. The number of issues the Convention is taking on continues to grow, however the size of the budget is not growing at the same scale and not every issue is within the Conventions legal scope. It is good to have knowledge of a host of issues but CITES cannot be the answer to all of them. This includes how we ensure an achievable work programme at meetings that allows time for healthy discussion and debate. We need to improve our ability to prioritize issues at the meetings.
3. Consider proposals and resolutions for the upcoming CoP. Of interest was the potential proposal to list caribou in Appendix I or II.
4. A meeting with the Secretariat about these issues could be useful.

IUCN:

1. Advancing the new subnational governments membership category recently approved at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (Motion A).
2. The One Health approach: Engage in conversations about IUCN’s role in this.

3. 30 x30 and America the Beautiful: How to engage in these conversations? Who's land? Where do the resources come from? How is a network of land managed over time? How much protected area versus other types of land ownership?
4. IUCN engagement in SBSTTA and the GBF: The GBF will be a vitally important guidance framework.

CBD:

1. Engagement in the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) negotiations.
2. Ensure that the subnational governments and the whole of government approach is well embedded in the GBF.
3. Ensure the adoption of the updated plan of action on subnational governments, cities, and other local authorities for biodiversity at the upcoming COP15.
4. Consider how outcomes of the GBF will impact conservation and management in North American. Topics that could have influence are new or updated multilateral trade agreements, changes to imports at borders, cost of financing the GBF targets, and the need for performance measurements and reporting.

The conversation highlighted numerous similarities and reminded us of a conversation we had in 2021 about the interconnectedness of the forums. Along those lines we discussed how One Health is a cross cutting issue in all the forums. There is a new global instrument is being developed on One Health. How do we build the right connections? Can we develop a North American approach to wildlife management and One Health? How can we be relevant in these discussions at the local, national, and international scales?

This information and input will be considered in as we update the Committee Work Plan.

Priorities from the 2020 discussion.

1. Maintain CITES support of sustainable, legal trade.
2. Follow CITES discussions around eels, precious corals, seahorses, conservation of African species, discussions on how to engage local people, and captive breeding related issues.
3. Follow and actively engage in IUCN conversations around wildlife trade and consumption including developing emergency motions.
4. Drive action on wildlife conservation through the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).
5. Ensure GBF targets maintain support of sustainable use and trade and livelihoods.
6. Follow and engage as needed in WHO's One Health approach.
7. Continue to engage in the IUCN motions process and cooperate to understand each other's positions and where possible develop joint positions.
8. In general, the belief was that CITES is not the appropriate place to deal with wildlife health issues.
9. Consider what we need (e.g., a new treaty) to address biodiversity, wildlife health, human health or what is being called the One Health approach.
10. Engaging in IUCN to help it regain its status as a leader on conservation issues.
11. Develop a voting guide about IUCN candidates related to sustainable use of wildlife. CIC is leading the charge on this.

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. Updates on both Provincial/territorial initiatives in addition to federal initiatives include the following.

The CWDC is involved in a comprehensive governance system review involving the Conservation, Wildlife Biodiversity (Federal/Provincial/Territorial) council. The intent is to restructure the council committees to focus on improved coordination and flow information and policy advice that will result in the reduction of committees supporting the council to three. Those are Wildlife Committee (CWDC), Ecosystem Conservation and Management Committee, and Biodiversity Framework Committee. They are anticipating full implementation of new governance system by March 2023

CWDC is addressing several invasive species and diseases such as avian influenza, wild pig, and SARS (COVID) in deer. They have a focused approach to trapping research and improvements. They are also incorporating more human dimensions aspects into the committee work. The CWDC continues its work on the Pan Canadian approach to Species at Risk by prioritizing species, places and sectors. Other key program areas include NAWMP, caribou and the knowledge consortium, and polar bear management and conservation. Finally, they are leaning into wildlife health.

CITES Technical Work Group Update

Carolyn Caldwell, Buddy Baker, Scott Buchanan, 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. The working groups addressed topics such as the conservation and management of paddlefish, sharks, American ginseng, and corals. A summary can be found [here](#). The Team was also member of the working group on the role of CITES in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade whose recommendations were submitted to the Standing Committee and adopted. 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. The discussion highlighted information gaps, a need to maintain communication on the issue, and state fish and wildlife agency concerns. The Team is working with the states, Provinces and Territories to gather information to develop positions and submit information for the current USFWS Federal Register Notice about species listings they are likely, unlikely, and undecided on for the CITES CoP. The Team thanks Mike Bednarski for his service and dedication to the work. They welcome Scott Buchanan as the new NEAFWA CITES representative.

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

Dough Beard, USGS

The USGS is the focal point for IPBES. The IPBES Sustainable Use Summary for Policy Makers is available for review until June 15th. Deb will reach out to the state fish and wildlife agencies to see if they want to review and comment on the document. In Canada, the Provinces and Territories can reach out to Fawziah (ZuZu) Gadallah, Environment and Climate Change Canada, to review and have input on the IPBES sustainable use summary for policymakers. They final assessment will be approved at the July 2022 IPBES CoP. The other assessment to be approved in July is the thematic assessment on

values.

US Fish and Wildlife Service, International Affairs Report

Don Morgan

CITES: On March 2, 2022 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published the first in a series of Federal Register Notices related to the upcoming 19th CoP. The first notice requested information and recommendations on animal and plant species proposals and on proposed resolutions, decisions, and agenda items for the U.S. to consider submitting for consideration at CoP19. The Service considered all of the recommendations submitted by organizations and individuals, as well as the factors described in the U.S. approach for CoP19 when deciding on what species they are likely, unlikely, or undecided on submitting a proposal to amend CITES Appendices I and II for consideration at CoP19. The USFWS published the second CoP19-related Federal Register notice on March 7, 2022. That notice described proposed resolutions, decisions, and agenda items that the U.S. might submit for consideration at CoP19. On April 26, the USFWS published the third Federal Register Notice. This Notice responds to the comments we received in response to our Federal Register Notice of March 2, 2022. This Notice responds only to comments received for species proposals to amend the Appendices. The USFWS is providing the public with a 30-day comment period in response to this notice. The comment period closes on May 26, 2022. The deadline for submission of the proposals, draft resolutions, draft decisions, and agenda items to the CITES Secretariat is June 17, 2022.

Trilateral: The USFWS will participate in the virtual 26th Annual Meeting of the Canada/Mexico/United States Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management on June 13-16, 2022 hosted by Canada. Diversity and inclusion are among the priorities of our Administration and align with the plenary theme. The Trilateral has become an effective mechanism to promote and facilitate cooperation and coordination among the three countries to preserve the unique biological wealth shared by the three nations.

World Health Organization/World Health Assembly (WHO/WHA): The USFWS is participating in an interagency effort to create an international instrument being developed under the World Health Assembly umbrella to address pandemics. The role for the USFWS is to ensure that One Health approach is an element that is incorporated into the animals component of this instrument.

International Work Coordination: The International Affairs Program in the USFWS has established an internal International Work Coordination group. This group brings together the people working on international conservation activities across the USFWS to share information, ensure better coordination and avoid duplication or the possibility of working at cross purposes. This group will be reaching out to AFWA Regional Leadership in the coming months to expand the coordination to account for the Service's work with states and regions.

Action Items / Resolutions / Motions

1. The Co-chairs will continue to discuss the purpose of and how to enhance AFWA's international engagement and potentially develop a strategy to consider how best to do this.
2. The Committee will update the Work Plan in the coming months for approval in September with consideration of the discussion on CITES, IUCN and CBD.
3. Develop a briefing document on the Edinburgh Declaration to share with members in July.

OTHER ITEMS MENTIONED:

The Edinburgh Declaration is still available for signature until the CBD CoP convenes. The Committee will develop a white paper to consider whether AFWA should sign this document or not. As of now, we still do not know the final language of the GBF, which was an issue of concern in the past.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

Submitted by Travis Ripley

Committee Member Attendees:

Travis Ripley, Alberta Fish and Wildlife
Stewardship
Stewart Liley, WAFWA CITES Representative
Buddy Baker, SEAFWA CITES Representative
Matt Eckert, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Jeremy Clare, Safari Club International
Mike Bednarski, Outgoing NEAFWA CITES
Representative
Carolyn Caldwell, MAFWA CITES Representative
John Jackson, Conservation Force
Don Morgan (for Anna Seidman), USFWS
Doug beard, USGS
Sara Schweitzer, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
Joe Goergen, Safari Club International Fund
Carolina Caceres (for Cecilia Loughheed), Canadian Wildlife Service
Scott Buchanan, NEAFWA CITES Representative
Francisco "Paco" Abarca, Arizona Game and Fish Department
Kurt Alt, Wild Sheep Foundation

Non-Committee Members Attendees:

Catherine Semcer, PERC
Keith Norris, The Wildlife Society
Shane Mahoney, Conservation Visions
Mike O'Brien, Fur Institute of Canada
Tammy Rundle, N.C. Wildlife Resources
Commission
Bob Petrie, Nove Scotia Department of Natural Resources
Colman O'Cruidain, WWF International
Laura Conlee, Missouri Department of Conservation
Basile van Havre, Co-chair UN-CBD OEWG
Meredith Longoria, Texas Parks & Wildlife
Will Dillman, South Carolina DNR
Brian Canaday, Missouri Department of
Conservation
David Bess, California Department of Fish and
Wildlife
Rachel Lévesque, Government of Quebec
Jonathan Hwang, U.S. State Department
Erin Hazelton, Ohio DNR
Dean Smith, AFWA
Karen Kinkead, Iowa DNR

Justine Hasz, Wisconsin DNR
Daniel Bergeron, New Hampshire Fish and Game
Christie Curley, Ontario Natural Resources and
Forestry
Marc Cattet, Yukon Fish and Wildlife Branch
Mark Nelson, Wyoming Game and Fish
Department
Rose Gnam, USFWS
John Silovsky, Texas Parks and Wildlife
Mary Cogliano, USFWS
Nicole Angeli, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of
Fish and Wildlife
Alfonso Garcia, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of
Fish and Wildlife
Mike Ielmini, U.S. Forest Service