

International Relations Committee - Report

Meeting of March 9, 2017

Bob Broscheid (Colorado), Co-Chair

John Blake (Newfoundland and Labrador), Co-Chair

Meeting convened from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, chaired by Bob Broscheid. Of the 20 participants in attendance, 10 were current Committee members or their proxies.

SCHEDULED DISCUSSION ITEMS:

2016/2017 Committee Work Plan and New Issues

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 and Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative.
- Serves as AFWA's source, sounding board and integrator of information and discussion about international issues.

The Committee reviewed some international issues. They include the following.

1. OffTake – The initiative is collecting data and analyzing the exploitation of wildlife across the globe. The main component of the initiative is a database, called the OFFTAKE database. To date they have focused on gathering data from Africa, Asia and Latin America. They hope to support global modelling of species exploitation and ultimately become a useful conservation tool to aid in conservation action and decision making. We have concerns about the use of the word exploitation and how the data will be used.
2. AFWA has been asked to join the CIC International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC). The IR Committee feels that membership could be beneficial to increase our engagement on sustainable use issues across the globe but that we should also weigh the cost of membership versus the benefits.
3. The Committee discussed the ongoing international discussions on phasing out lead ammunition through forums such as the Convention on Migratory Species. The Lead and Fish and Wildlife Working Group will take the lead on this issue.

Canadian Federal Report

Barry Smith

Barry Smith provided information on some issues that have a federal and Provincial/Territorial

nexus. Canada is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and therefore they are trying to meet the Aichi Targets. Across Canada, Caribou populations are in decline. The Provinces and Federal agencies engage on Caribou conservation. There is a federal plan and there are also Provincial/Territorial plans. Sage Grouse is an important species that they are managing together. Canada is embarking on DNA sampling of polar bears to improve enforcement under CITES. They are also working together on bat conservation and in particular addressing white-nosed syndrome impacts.

CITES Technical Work Group Update

Carolyn Caldwell, Buddy Baker, Jack Buckley, Jim deVos

Four representatives (the CITES Technical Work Group) represent the 4 regional associations in CITES ((Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA), Jim deVos (WAFWA), Buddy Baker (SEAFWA) and Jack Buckley (NEAFWA)).

The CITES 17th Conference of the Parties (CoP) was held from September 24 to October 5, 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Sixty-two species proposals were considered. The agenda also contained nearly 100 different topics that were discussed at the meeting. Deb Hahn, Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA) and Buddy Baker (SEAFWA) attended for the states. The report for the meeting is on AFWA's website. The next CITES meetings are in July. The CITES Technical Work Group has seen an erosion of support for sustainable use in CITES. They feel that when discussions occur with the new federal administration this topic should be added as an area of concern for the States recognizing that sustainable use of wildlife resources is a fundamental principal of the CITES treaty. They will be engaging with AFWA leadership to get some direction on how and if the state agencies should take steps to help reverse this trend. Another issues that has a nexus with CITES and furbearer conservation and trapping is a ban instituted by India on all reptile skins and pelts from 3 species of furbearers. The CITES Technical WG is in communication with USFWS on this.

Update on Activities of the USFWS Office of International Affairs

Bryan Arroyo, USFWS Assistant Director International Affairs

Secretary Zinke has been confirmed as Secretary of the Interior. The next confirmation will be the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. They hope to have the USFWS Director announced by August. USFWS is engaging with the administration on their 2018 budget. They are waiting to hear about a continuing resolution or other action on their 2017 budget.

The CITES Animals Committee will be held from July 18-21, 2017. The joint Animal and Plants Committee will be held on July 22. The Plants Committee will be held July 22-25. The Standing Committee will be held on November 27- December 1, 2017. All the meetings will be held in Geneva. At the Conference of the Parties, they were involved in listings for sharks, rays, rosewood, nautilus, etc. They also helped advance support for closing domestic ivory markets. The Combatting Wildlife Trafficking grant request closed. They have over 100 proposals and 3 million to support the grants. The Trilateral Wildlife Committee is meeting the week of May 15 in Ensenada, Mexico.

USFWS International Law Enforcement Program Update

William Woody

A couple of years ago Law Enforcement received new funding and with bipartisan support they used those funds to place Special Agent Attaches. They are based at U.S. Embassies and serve under the Chief of Mission. They have Attaches in countries such as Gabon, Tanzania, Peru, etc. Recently, President Trump signed an Executive Order on Trans National Crime which added wildlife trafficking

to the list of crimes.

They find that the countries need help with 3 particular aspects of enforcement. One need is evidence recovery and technical support. Second, they need forensic support. Lastly they ask for training. Some of the training is done by state game wardens. They see an array of wildlife products and species being illegally trafficked such as orangutan skulls, squirrel monkey blood, turtles, ivory, etc.

International Program U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Report

Greg Butcher

Greg is the Migratory Species Coordinator for the USFS. They have partnerships across the hemisphere for species in decline. Outside of the migratory species program they work on disaster relief and disease outbreaks. They train other countries on our incident command system. In cooperation with USAID, they address issues on timber and illegal trade. They also study invasive species in other countries that are a problem within the US and conduct rangeland and grassland management.

Sustainable Use of Wildlife (SUW) Committee Report

Bryant White

Sustaining regulated trapping as a wildlife management tool continues to be the main thrust of the Committee. Trapping is used extensively by the state fish and wildlife agencies and its partners to protect endangered species, conduct research on and manage health and diseases, and address wildlife conflict for example. The Joint Management Committee met in Ottawa Canada on November 17-18, 2017. Representatives from Canada, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the U.S. attended and presented their annual reports. Likely the next meeting will be held in Europe in late 2017.

Action Items / Resolutions / Motions

N/A

THREATS AND EMERGING ISSUES IDENTIFIED:

N/A

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED: N/A

Submitted by Bob Broscheid

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