

International Relations Committee - Report

Meeting of March 17, 2016

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 and John Blake. Of the 18 participants in attendance, 8 were current Committee members or their proxies.

SCHEDULED DISCUSSION ITEMS:

2015/2016 Committee Work Plan

All Attendees

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 implementation of the 2015 Work Plan. All actions have either been advanced or are in the process of being advanced. A draft 2016/2017 Work Plan will be sent to Committee members with the meeting summary for comment. The 2016/2017 Work Plan will be approved in September 2016.

Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee Report

John Blake, Director Newfoundland and Labrador

Canadian Wildlife management involves both federal and provincial/territorial governments and from a management authority perspective is notionally represented by the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee. 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 the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Canada Coast Guard) with responsibility for wildlife conservation in Canada. The role of the CWDC is to provide leadership in the development and co-ordination of policies, strategies, programs and activities that address wildlife and habitat issues of national concern and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. The CWDC provides advice and support to appropriate Assistant Deputies', Deputies' and Ministers' Councils on these matters.

John has just finished his term as co-chair of the CWDC and is in the third and final year on the executive committee. Below is an overview of issues being addressed by the CWDC.

Species at Risk Legislation and Policy

- Engage and consult with all members of the CWDC on Species at Risk Act (SARA) policies and implementation.
- CWDC held a focused workshop on how to improve Species at Risk (SAR) delivery among and between both levels of government and are trying to enhance collaboration on SAR that occur in multiple jurisdictions (e.g., grizzly bear, Plains bison).

Disease Monitoring

- Track the progress and status of the national scientific effort related to the White-Nose Syndrome in bats and developing a strategy and action plan
- Conducted CWDC jurisdictional scan regarding regulations/directions/efforts to prevent the introduction or spread of CWD in wild ungulates.

Species Specific Actions

- Further develop various conservation and management approaches for the incidental take of migratory birds and exploring tools for management of overabundant Arctic geese
- Caribou management takes up much time for both federal and provincial/territorial members. The CWDC continue to track progress and share information on Caribou conservation and management, including the consideration of nationally generated science guidelines for the identification of critical habitat and continuance of bilateral work to protect and recover Boreal Caribou as well as work of the National Boreal Caribou Technical Committee (NBCTC)
- CWDC are engaged in the preparation of a polar bear management plan mandated in accordance with the Special Concern Listing under SARA and we continue to strive for better coordination in decision-making for shared subpopulations of polar bear
- Support Canada's strategic actions with Polar Bear Range State jurisdictions and prepare for polar bear positions for CITES 2016 Conference of the Parties.

Habitat Management

- The Efficient Habitat Conservation sub-committee was tasked to determine if a landscape approach to habitat conservation increases effectiveness and efficiency in achieving multi-species gain by evaluating case studies.
- Engage nationally with the USFWS Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs)

Issues that are of interest to Provinces and Territories include wetland policy, multi-year SAR plans and a greater emphasis being placed on bundling species and landscape level management planning; multi jurisdictional engagement on invasive species monitoring; implications of rights based harvesting on species conservation; predator management (wolf and coyote); and multi-jurisdictional collaborative harvest management for species such as Polar Bear and Caribou.

Canada is hosting the Trilateral in Ottawa in May. Delegations from each country meet annually to discuss a wide range of topics, from joint, on-the-ground projects to issues of law enforcement to the development of information databases. The Trilateral Committee is headed by the Director General of the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Head of the International Affairs Coordination Unit, of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico, who comprise the Executive Table. In addition, there are currently five other active working tables: Species of Common Conservation Concern, Law Enforcement, Ecosystem Conservation, Migratory Birds, and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

Canadian representation on applicable AFWA committees is key to getting our issues on the table and incorporated into AFWA positions and action. Canada is actively working at being involved in appropriate AFWA committees and are currently engaged in or on the Technology, Climate Change, Endangered Species, Invasive Species, Bird Conservation, Fish Wildlife and Health, International Relations, Executive, and Shooting Sports Committees.

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 Technical Work Group has solicited state agency comments on two Federal Register notices related to the proposals, resolutions, and decisions potentially moving forward at the CITES Conference of the Parties in October 2016. They have also provided comments on potential proposals being advanced by other countries including Thresher and Silky Sharks and Peregrine Falcon.

The Work Group received a grant to conduct outreach and education on international treaties and conventions through regional association meetings, webinars, and at international forums. All four workshops have been completed and a webinar was held. They have developed outreach materials for this grant including a one-page outreach document about Why and How the state agencies participate in CITES and business cards for the Technical Work Group Representatives. The Technical Work Group greatly appreciates the continued support for the National Conservation Need is critical to maintaining funding for state agency travel to CITES meetings.

CITES briefings was conducted in the House and the Senate to provide information on how and why the state agencies participate in CITES and also highlight the importance of sustainable use, livelihoods, and maintaining a scientific basis for CITES decisions. The briefings highlighted three case studies on American Alligator, Hawaiian Sandalwood, and Polar Bear. Colleagues from both Provincial and Federal members attended these briefings also.

Update on Activities of the USFWS Office of International Affairs

Bryan Arroyo, USFWS Assistant Director International Affairs

There are many actions that have resulted from the Executive Order on wildlife trafficking. The USFWS is focused on three priorities. They include strengthening enforcement abroad, reducing domestic demand, and international cooperation between partners such as CITES, Convention on Migratory Species, etc. Poaching also continues to be a major concern. The next Advisory Council meeting will be on April 15, 2016. The USFWS has changed their wildlife trafficking grants program. The new RFP allows for grants beyond Africa. They are seeing more and more issues throughout Central and South America related to timber, sea turtles, and other species. The USFWS will announce what species proposals, resolutions and decisions they will bring forward to the CITES Conference of the Parties on April 27, which is a CITES imposed deadline.

Border Governors Wildlife Table Update

Jay Roberson, Texas Parks and Wildlife

Border states in both the U.S. and Mexico have advanced numerous wildlife issues and actions. Some examples include the following. Arizona held a wetlands workshop with staff of Mexico's Wildlife Office focused on wetland restoration and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Chihuahua, in collaboration with CONABIO, published the state's strategic plan for the conservation of its priority species. Wildlife officials and staff participated in the first bi-national wildlife management workshop co-sponsored by the University of Chihuahua and New Mexico State University. Coahuila Wildlife Department and the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture in Mexico City organized a hog control workshop in Torreon in August 2015 with the participation of 60 professionals from local, state and national entities. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provided the technical information to build the traps and the educational kits in Spanish distributed to the participant. The Tamaulipas Wildlife Commission participated in the Latin America-U.S. Leadership Forum and presented an update on a jaguar monitoring project in the Gomez Farias area. Rene Celis, Operations Director reported that the state's population survey of Morelet's

crocodile is ongoing. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) helped to organize the Latin America-U.S. Leadership Forum at the Safari Club International (SCI) Convention in February. Brazil, Peru, Mexico and SCI/SCIF staff and officials participated. Argentina and Paraguay were represented by SCI chapter members. Brazil and Paraguay asked to attend the Professional Development Exchange Program in Texas to learn about the North American Wildlife Conservation model and specific topics such as how to set hunting regulation and how to control feral hog. TPWD proudly reports that Peru's new Wildlife Director is a graduate of TPWD's Professional Development Exchange program in Texas and has commended the program.

On a related note, a proposal was introduced in the Mexican Congress to prohibit sport hunting in Mexico by amending Mexico's Wildlife Law and Firearms Law. Mexico's Hunting Federation (FEMECA) is leading the opposition to the proposal. The Committee will work with partners to monitor this proposal.

Update from the Sustainable Use of Wildlife (SUW) Committee

Deb Hahn on behalf of the Committee

The U.S. participates as an observer in the Joint Management Committee (JMC) meetings because of our Agreed Minute with the European Union (EU). At each meeting we present an update on our Best Management Program and progress on implementing the Agreed Minute. Although the JMC has not met for two years, the U.S. continues to meet its commitments and provide an annual report to the EU. There is also cooperation with Canada on trap testing.

International Programs US Forest Service Update

Greg Butcher

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has an international program. They work closely with USAID on timber and illegal logging. They conduct disaster training for both fire and natural disasters (E.g., earthquakes). They also provide training to other countries to help them develop their own disaster response.

Greg and Jim Chu work together to prevent species from being listed on the Endangered Species Act by working on full lifecycle conservation of birds, bats, butterflies, and dragonflies. They work with National Forests and Grasslands on management actions in the U.S. and promote partnerships on shared migratory species across the hemisphere. For example, they work with partners in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico on the Western Hummingbird Partnership. With the support of many other partners, they also implement conservation actions for shorebirds through Cooper River International Migratory Bird Initiative (CRIMBI). The initiative seeks to strengthen conservation of migratory birds along the entire flyway—from the north Slope of Alaska to the southernmost reaches of the Pacific Coast—through effective international partnerships and action on the ground.

Staff Updates

Deb Hahn

The International Relations Director provided updates on a few aspects of her portfolio including the Southern Wings Program, state ivory and rhino horn bans, the Blue Ribbon Panel, the North American State of the Birds report, and Conservation Business plans.

Since 2009, the Southern Wings program has helped state fish and wildlife agencies partner in the conservation of shared priority migratory birds with partners throughout the Hemisphere. The state fish and wildlife agencies have provided over \$1.2 million U.S. dollars and over \$550,000 in in-kind donations through Southern Wings. All state contributions are matched at a minimum of 100% by non-state funds before directly supporting on-the-ground projects. Twenty-nine states participate in the Program (Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin, and NEAFWA (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and DC).

Southern Wings has demonstrated clear successes in protecting and managing crucial wintering habitat. Oklahoma, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Iowa focused on grassland conservation and restoration in Northern Mexico. Over 100,000 acres of grasslands have been secured for conservation. Laguna Madre located on the Gulf Coast just south of the U.S. border is an important stop over and wintering habitat for Migratory shorebirds and hundreds of thousands of Red heads. Texas Parks and Wildlife along with other partners restored 62 acres of mangroves. The Caribbean coast of Guatemala is an important area that supports at least 153 species of neotropical migrants during the nonbreeding season. Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee and Texas have helped conservation almost 9,000 acres that are now being managed for shared species. The Yucatan Peninsula is a critical area for songbirds, waterbirds, and waterfowl. In collaboration with work done by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Missouri and Tennessee worked with local partners in the Yucatan to conserve key habitats. The National Audubon Society, The Bahamas National Trust, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries are some of the partners involved in Piping Plover conservation in the Bahamas. Here we have the opportunity to protect and manage habitat used by 20% of the wintering piping plover population. A huge success this year was the declaration of the 113,000 acre Joulter Cays national park. However, not insignificant is the continued monitoring and research being conducted.

State ivory and rhino horn bans and related sport hunting trophy bans have been brought forward in twenty-two states and have passed in four states. The language varies and the species included vary in each state. The impacts of implementation on state fish and wildlife agencies is unknown as none of the legislation has been implemented yet. The Association has developed a briefing paper on the issue. If you would like a copy please contact Deb Hahn (dhahn@fishwildlife.org).

The Blue Ribbon Panel announced its recommendations to fund fish and wildlife conservation in the U.S. The recommend that Congress dedicate up to \$1.3 billion annually in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program. For more information on the past and future work of the panel please see the [video](#) of the press conference and the [final report](#).

Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. will release the State of North America's Birds report on May 18, 2016 in Ottawa, Canada as part of the Tri-Lateral meeting. The report will be the first ever North American analysis of the state of our shared birds.

The conservation community continues to develop conservation business plans for birds. The first completed plan is the [Atlantic Flyway Business Strategy](#). The Pacific Flyway plan is underway with support from partners across the Hemisphere. There are also two workshops being planned in Mexico to work on the Western Forest Plan. The Prairies to Pampas Conservation Business Plan has received initial funding from the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

Action Items / Resolutions / Motions

N/A

THREATS AND EMERGING ISSUES IDENTIFIED:

N/A

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED: N/A

Submitted by: John Blake and Bob Broscheid

Committee Member Attendees:

John Blake, johnblake@gov.nl.ca

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

Carolyn Caldwell, MAFWACITES@gmail.com

Jack Buckley, jack.buck@state.ma.us

Bryan Arroyo, bryan_arroyo@fws.gov

Jim deVos, jdevos@azgfd.gov

Mike Begier, mike.begier@aphis.usda.gov

Don MacLauchlan, MacLauchland@gmail.com

Greg Butcher, gsbutcher@fs.fed.us

Jeremy Clare, jclare@safariclub.org (proxy)

John Jackson, jjjiii@att.net

Non-Committee Members Attendees:

Josee Lanctot, Josee.lanctot@canada.ca

Matthew Lewis, mlewis@safariclub.org

Jeff Patchen, jpatchen@safariclub.org

Jay Roberson, jay.orberson@tpwd.texas.gov

Caroline Murphy, cmurphy@wildlife.org

Ed Boggess