

International Relations Committee - Report

Meeting of September 23, 2019

Rick Jacobson (Connecticut), Co-Chair

Travis Ripley (Alberta), Co-Chair

Meeting convened from 10:00 am to 12:00pm, chaired by Rick Jacobson. Of the 23 participants in attendance, 10 were current Committee members or their proxies.

SCHEDULED DISCUSSION ITEMS:

2019/2020 Committee Work Plan

Rick Jacobson, Chief - Bureau of Natural Resources, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

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. The Work Plan was sent to the Committee members for final comments before COB September 30 and will be submitted to AFWA in October.

AFWA Strategic Plan

Rick Jacobson, Chief - Bureau of Natural Resources, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

The Committee took time to consider how their work is reflected in the current Strategic Plan and recommendations for consideration during the upcoming strategic plan development. There will be more opportunities for Committees to provide input into the strategic planning process in 2020. There was only one comment. It recommended that the strategic plan should acknowledge that we represent the interests of the Association both throughout the western hemisphere (i.e., Southern Wings) and globally (e.g., CITES, IUCN, CBD, CMS).

Update on the Sustainable Use and Trade Resolution

Rick Jacobson, Chief - Bureau of Natural Resources, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

The Committee members were, in concert with the Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee, engaged in July and August on development of a resolution on sustainable use and trade. The Committee submitted the resolution to AFWA's Resolutions Committee for review and comment. No comments were received from the Resolutions Committee or at the International Relations Committee. The resolution was approved at the AFWA Business meeting and is available [here](#).

Opportunity to become a partner of the Convention on Biological Diversity Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments

Rick Jacobson, Chief - Bureau of Natural Resources, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

The Committee reviewed the briefing document on the Convention on Biological Diversity's Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments and the recommendation for AFWA to become a partner of the Advisory Committee. The briefing document and request for input was also sent to Committee members before the meeting. We received two emails of support for AFWA to become a partner of the Advisory Committee. After discussion, numerous members provided support for the recommendation. A motion was made to seek approval at the AFWA Business Meeting to become a partner of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments. It was seconded. At the AFWA Business Meeting, the recommendation was approved. A letter will be submitted to Regions4 requesting partner status.

Canadian Wildlife Service Update

Marie-Josée Couture, Regional Director for Canadian Wildlife Service at Environment and Climate Change Canada

Marie-Josée Couture provided an informal update. The next Canadian Wildlife Directors Meeting will be in Ottawa on 29 to 30 October. The last meeting included a workshop on Conservation Thresholds. CWDC meeting items were: Implementation of Pan-Canadian approach on Species at Risk, Priority Species, Canada Nature Fund, presentation by NAWCC-Canada and Habitat Joint Ventures on Species at Risk. They discussed priority species such as caribou. AFWA was present at the meeting. In Fiscal Year 2018 the federal budget included 1.3 Billion over 5 years for wildlife conservation. From those funds, there is money to work on migratory bird conservation across the hemisphere for priority shared species.

International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation Report

Tamás Marghescu, Director General CIC

AWFA has joined the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) as a member recently. The CIC's mission is to promote and support the conservation of wildlife and related landscapes, local communities, and traditions through sustainable use including hunting. The organization was created in the 1920s and is an intergovernmental observer in UN Environmental Conventions and they have full diplomatic status at the seat of their Headquarters in Hungary. Their priorities include a focus on communications, forging alliances and working with like-minded organizations to increase our influence and power. This includes symposia with international media. Integrating conservation education into national education curricula is another priority. Advocacy at international conventions and on national as well as international political issues is a further priority. Building partnerships at all levels with like-minded organizations, especially in rural settings provides the necessary political weight to influence politics. They are the patrons of the "One with Nature" world exhibition that will be held in Budapest, Hungary from September 25th to October 14th 2021 and invited the AFWA community to participate in the exhibition to introduce the rest of the world to the American model of wildlife conservation.

CITES Technical Work Group Update

Buddy Baker, Jim deVos, Mike Bednarski, Carolyn Caldwell

The CITES Technical Work Group (Team) with Buddy Baker (Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries), Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative), Jim deVos (Arizona Game and Fish Department) and Deb Hahn (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies and where applicable the Provinces and Territories at the 18th Conference of the Parties (CoP) in Geneva, Switzerland. In addition, AFWA International Relations Committee Co-chair Rick Jacobson (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) served as the state representative on the U.S. Delegation. The CITES Secretariat, because

of a change in meeting venue, constrained participant registrations which resulted in Mike Bednarski (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries) not being able to attend as the new Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies representative. A record 140 documents proposing new measures and policies on international trade were submitted to the CoP for consideration. Fifty-seven proposals to amend the species listed in Appendix I and II were also considered. Issues included but were not limited to eels, coral, paddlefish, turtle, and sea cucumber conservation; captive bred and ranched specimens; traceability of wildlife; rural communities and livelihoods; and the 2021-2030 CITES Strategic Vision. One thousand seven hundred Party delegates, observers, and journalist attended including 169 member governments and the European Union as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) representing groups from the Humane Society International to the Wildlife Conservation Society to the Safari Club International Foundation. The Work Group works closely throughout the year with the USFWS and engages strongly with our Canadian partners. The Team noted an increased number of overarching documents seeking actions related to non-CITES listing species such as those submitted for songbirds and amphibians. It remains to be seen whether this will continue and/or become a burden to CITES implementation at the domestic level. Almost all species proposals submitted were accepted. The Technical WG had a positive meeting with the new CITES Secretary-General. For addition details, the Technical WG CoP report is available [here](#).

USFWS Electronic Permitting

Eric Alvarez, USFWS Acting Assistant Director International Affairs:

The USFWS continues the development of an interim electronic permitting system that will be the bridge to a fully functional electronic permitting system. The interim system should be online by the end of 2019. The USFWS has secured a small amount of initial funding that will be used to develop the technical requirements for the larger development of a modern electronic permitting system that, once full funding is secured, could be online by the end of 2020. This timeline is dependent on receiving the funds they have requested in their budget for FY 2020. The state fish and wildlife agencies are extremely excited and supportive of USFWS's efforts to move to a fully electronic permitting system.

Update on Activities of the USFWS Office of International Affairs

Eric Alvarez, USFWS Acting Assistant Director International Affairs

Eric Alvarez noted their participation in the CITES CoP and discussed wildlife trafficking, and international grants. The U.S. Government is spending around \$130 million to minimize and eliminate illegal wildlife trade. They have had some large and impactful law enforcement operations that have led to arrests and convictions. International Affairs continues to support species conservation across the globe with their international grants programs.

International Relations Director Update

Deb Hahn, AFWA International Relations Director

The International Relations Director reminded the Committee that the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Conference of the Parties will be held in 2020. We will review the agenda and documents to determine whether and where the Committee and the states should participate. We have already provided comments and input on the document related to the America's Flyway Framework. The International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) World Conservation Congress will be held in June 2020. We have already weighed in on the draft Programme. We will review and provide input to the Motions when they are available for review in December 2019. The Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of the Parties will be held in October 2020. The state agencies are considering how to provide input on the Global Biodiversity Framework. Currently, there is an opportunity to provide input before the first draft of the framework is available in January 2020. Southern Wings continues to grow. Thirty-two states have contributed almost \$2.9 million.

Action Items / Resolutions / Motions

The Committee supported and did not have any edits to or comments on the Resolution that the International Relations Committee and the Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee submitted to the AFWA Resolutions Committee (**REAFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE USE AND REGULATED TRADE**)

The Committee approved the recommendation for AFWA to become a partner of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments.

The Committee will discuss how the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management can continue to engage senior leadership in the three countries.

The Committee will consider a future agenda item to learn about the Wild Harvest Initiative.

THREATS AND EMERGING ISSUES IDENTIFIED:

N/A

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

Submitted by Rick Jacobson

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