

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



ASSOCIATION of
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

November 2025

Updates



COMMUNICATIONS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT:

Thank you for your input on IUCN motions and CITES issues over the past year.

ACTIONS:

None at this time

RECENT/UPCOMING MEETINGS AND DATES OF INTEREST:

- Ramsar CoP15: July 23 - 31
- IUCN World Conservation Congress: October 8 - 15
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) 27: October 20 - 24
- CITES CoP20: November 24 - December 5
- Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) CoP15: March 23 - 26, 2026

Updates

RAMSAR

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands CoP15 met in July. They approved the fifth [Strategic Plan for 2025 to 2034](#). They passed a resolution that encourages waterbird conservation and flyway level collaboration through partnerships such as the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Another resolution promoted sustainable lifestyles for the wise use of wetlands by integration of sustainable lifestyles-based interventions in wetland management, programs, and policies.

CBD

The core mandate of SBSTTA-27 was to provide science-based recommendations to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). A crucial focus was preparation for the first global review of collective progress towards the KMGBF's 23 targets. Key discussions also centered on the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change, risk assessment, invasive alien species, biodiversity and health, and integrating scientific insights, including from IPBES assessments, to guide international biodiversity policy.

Road to CITES CoP20

The CITES Technical Work Group—comprised of Stewart Liley (Western), Carolyn Caldwell (Midwest), Buddy Baker (Southeastern), Gordon Batcheller (Northeast), and Deb Hahn (AFWA)—has been advancing AFWA's CoP20 priorities over the past year.

They are working closely with partners and CITES Parties to advance priorities and gather scientific and policy information. Among the listing proposals submitted that are the highest priority for AFWA members are several involving species native to the U.S. and Canada, including the following. (continued next page)

IUCN

The [IUCN 2025 Congress](#) outcomes include a [20-year strategic vision for nature](#), 148 resolutions adopted by members, and the [Abu Dhabi Action Plan](#). The Congress also initiated a [IUCN Program for 2026–2029](#) to guide the organizations work.

At the Congress, 40 motions were approved. The final text of the motions were negotiated at the Congress. We will share the final text when they are available. Some overarching themes of the motions included securing the 30x30 global protection target with a rights-based approach; (continued next page)

The International Relations Committee guides involvement in and/or engages on international conventions, initiatives, agreements, and policies that impact U.S. state and Canadian provincial and territorial fish and wildlife agencies.



enacting targeted strategies for critical ecosystems like freshwater and marine areas; and mainstreaming nature-based solutions into global policies for climate, development, and disaster risk reduction. The resolutions mandate specific actions and guidance to IUCN members (governments and NGOs) to translate these policy commitments into on-the-ground conservation success.

Some of these commitments involved conserving wetlands and grasslands, managing rangelands sustainably, addressing energy's impacts on wildlife, addressing wildlife trafficking, establishing a process to consider whether the IUCN Sustainable Use Policy needs updating, advancing a holistic approach to wildlife, ecosystem, and human health, conserving freshwater fish and ecosystems, enhancing subnational government participation in IUCN, and developing an action plan to implement the sustainable-use-related targets of the KMGBF.



The CMS CoP15 will be held in March 2026. CMS published the list of species being considered for listing in the CMS Appendices. Species native to the U.S. and/or Canada that are being proposed include Hudsonian godwit (Appendix I), lesser yellowlegs (Appendix I), Snowy Owl (Appendix II), 3 species of thresher shark (Appendix I), scalloped and great hammerhead sharks (Appendix I), and black-capped petrel (Appendix I).



AFWA's Current Position is to Support:

- American ginseng: exempt products from artificially cultivated ginseng
- Peregrine falcon: transfer from Appendix I to Appendix II (submitted by the U.S. and Canada)
- Transfer of Guadalupe Fur Seal from Appendix I to Appendix II
- Deletion of Caribbean Monk Seal from Appendix I

AFWA's Current Position is to Oppose:

- All *Anguilla* species: inclusion in Appendix II, with a delayed entry into effect until June 5, 2027
- Genus-wide listings for *Crotalus* and *Sistrurus*: inclusion in Appendix II

Top Priority Documents and Issues:

- Doc. 87: Eel (*Anguilla* spp.) Resolution: AFWA supports advancing a resolution focused on conservation, management, enforcement, and collaboration.
- Docs. 15.1 and 15.2: The Role of CITES in Reducing Zoonotic Disease: AFWA focus is on ensuring the work aligns with the mandate of CITES.
- Doc 61: Rapid Movement of Wildlife Diagnostic Samples: AFWA supports tools and processes that allow the faster movement of select wildlife samples.
- Doc. 102: The 'Lookalike' Criterion: AFWA recommends a review to ensure the criteria are adequate and implemented appropriately.

CONTACTS

U.S. Co-Chair

Ryan Brown (Virginia)

Canadian Co-Chair

Vacant

Staff:

Deb Hahn, International Relations Director
(202) 838-3458, dhahn@fishwildlife.org