



AFWA International Relations Committee

2026-2027 Work Plan

Guidelines: Each AFWA Committee, Subcommittee and Workgroup is required to review their charge and develop a work plan at the AFWA Annual Meeting and finalize in early October. The purpose of the work plan is to improve communication and effectiveness of committee work and enable committee chairs and the Executive Committee to evaluate their status annually.

Committee Work Plan		
Date: September 2026		
Committee Name: International Relations		
Co-Chair: Ryan Brown (Virginia)	Co-Chair: Stephen Casselman (Ontario)	Staff: Deb Hahn
Committee Charge: • Develop AFWA positions on all appropriate international matters including agreements, treaties, conventions, regulations and initiatives such as International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and its specialist groups and especially on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild 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 Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), and IUCN. • Serve as AFWA's source, sounding board and integrator of information and discussion about international issues. • Increase the number of voices informing discussions, positions, and products.		
Changes to the Charge: N/A		
List Major Activities and Objectives Accomplished During the Last Year: 1. Represented U.S. State agencies — and, where applicable, Canadian Provinces and Territories — in CITES meetings (see details under Work Group activities). 2. Supported the states participating in Southern Wings by advancing new projects, supporting the Advisory Committee, planning a recognition program, implementing the 25% challenge, and conducting direct outreach of over ½ of the state agencies. 3. Participated in meetings of important related to other international treaties and conventions. 4. Engaged with the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee (CWDC) on international issues and provided regular updates through the International Relations Committee.		

5. Actively contributed to debates and initiatives of the Sustainable Use discussions and events at the international level.
6. Engaged with partners and contributed to positions of the CBD Advisory Group on Subnational Governments.
7. Coordinated with the partners on matters related to CITES and other multilateral environmental agreements.
8. Began planning for the CBD Conference of Parties (CoP17).
9. Track outcomes of international meetings held in 2025 and engage as needed.
10. Engage in discussions at the 2027 Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management.

List Activities and Objectives that will be Accomplished in the Coming Year:

1. Represent AFWA at CITES Standing and Animals Committee meetings.
2. Participate in international meetings as needed.
3. Support involvement with the CBD's Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments.
4. Engage in discussions and initiatives at the 2027 Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management.
5. Contribute to AFWA's engagement at the CBD meetings.
6. Collaborate with partners on cross-border conservation issues, as opportunities arise.
7. Support Southern Wings, including efforts to secure new funding partnerships.
8. Engage with WHSRN, America's Flyway Framework, and associated flyway investment strategies.
9. Maintain collaboration with the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee (CWDC) and other Canadian partners on relevant conventions and initiatives.
10. Participate in the Joint Management Committee meeting, if held.
11. Provide regular updates on International Relations Committee activities through written communications and update documents.

Comments:

Workgroup Work Plan

Date: October 2026

Workgroup Name: CITES Technical Work Group	
Members: Gordon Batcheller: Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Carolyn Caldwell: Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Buddy Baker: Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Stewart Liley: Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies	Staff: Deb Hahn
Workgroup Charge: 1. To inform State, Provincial, and Territorial fish and wildlife agency directors of policy developments affecting conservation at an international (i.e., through CITES) scale. 2. To formulate and advocate for policy positions reflecting the interests of State, Provincial and Territorial fish and wildlife agencies in international forums. 3. To formulate and advocate for federal policies (e.g., U.S. and Canadian) that reflect State, Provincial, and Territorial fish and wildlife agency interests. 4. To provide biological and administrative information to assist the federal governments in executing their international responsibilities. 5. To minimize unnecessary oversight and restrictions to State, Provincial and Territorial fish and wildlife agency authority because of policies adopted under international conventions (i.e., CITES). 6. To support sustainable use principles and the tenets of the North American Model internationally.	
Changes to Charge: None	
List Major Activities and Objectives Accomplished During the Last Year: 1. Disseminated information on CITES and gathered information from the state agencies on CITES issues as needed to inform USFWS positions for CoP20 and in preparation for the Animals and Standing Committees. 2. Met with the USFWS in Washington DC. 3. Participated in Federal CITES Interagency Coordination meetings. 4. Participated in the CITES CoP20. 5. Participated in International Relations Committee meetings at the North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference and the AFWA's Annual Meeting. 6. Provided a meeting summary of CITES related matters and update the state Directors at their respective regional association meeting and to division and section chiefs, and other state staff. 7. Participated in an international working groups.	
List Activities and Objectives that Will be Accomplished in the Coming Year: 1. Prepare for and develop positions on important issues for the 2026/2027 Animal and Standing Committee meetings as needed. 2. Disseminate information on CITES and gather information from the State, Provincial, and Territorial agencies on CITES issues to provide input to the USFWS and Canadian Wildlife Service when applicable.	

3. Collaborate with the USFWS.
4. Meet once a year with the Provinces and Territories (likely at CWDC) to discuss important and relevant CITES issues.
5. Communicate regularly with CWDC to discuss issues of importance and relevance to the State, Provincial and Territorial agencies.
6. Participate in US CITES Interagency Coordination meetings.
7. Provide an annual summary of CITES-related matters and update the State, Provincial, and Territorial directors at their respective regional association meeting(s), and other state agency staff, and through the CWDC.
8. Participate in International Relations Committee meetings at the North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference and the AFWA Annual Meeting.
9. Continue to emphasize the importance of modernizing the USFWS's permitting system, including development of electronic permitting, to expedite permits for State agencies as well as constituents needing to ship CITES listed species or products internationally. Assist with improvements to the permitting process where possible.
10. Advocate for and implement reforms to CITES policies and procedures as defined in the State Fish and Wildlife Agency Association Action Plan initiated by USFWS Director Brian Nesvik.

Describe any Changes you Anticipate to the Work Group: N/A

Date Workgroup Formed: 1994

Expected Termination Date: ongoing

Comments