Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee

116th Annual Meeting of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Chair: Eric Lobner (WI DNR)
Vice-Chair: vacant

Wednesday, September 16th, 2026
3:30 – 5:30 PM (Eastern Time Zone)

Committee Charge:
Advocate the North American Model of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and promote the sustainable use of fish and wildlife resources at the international level.

Subcommittees and Working Groups:
U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group

Minutes

- Agenda review, adjustments, and opening comments (Eric Lobner)
  - A few agenda adjustments were made to accommodate schedules.
  - The minutes from the Committee meeting held at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March were approved by motion. Available online.
  - 45 committee members and partners attended from state, federal, tribal and provincial agencies and NGO conservation organizations.

- Introductions (Eric)

- Update on CITES/Lynx/Bobcat (Matt Hogan (USFWS), Stuart Liley (NM GFD))
  - Incidental take of Canada lynx and the potential effects to the issuance of CITES tags for bobcat and bobcat pelt trade.
  - Lynx range states have nearly met the threshold for the allowable take of lynx in bobcat sets under the current Incidental Take Statement

    - If the threshold is met, lynx range states will no longer be able to issue CITES tags for harvested bobcats eliminating trade in bobcat pelts from those states
    - USFWS Division of Management Authority is in the process of developing a new Biological Opinion on Canada lynx population status in the lower 48 States
    - The new BO will result in a new ITS with new thresholds and will be completed by November. Lynx range state will have the opportunity to review prior to completion
    - The Committee and lynx range states would like to thank Matt Hogan for his assistance and cooperation with states to help resolve this concern

- Wild Harvest Initiative (Shane Mahoney, Conservation Visions)
    - The program produces data on wild harvesting and its importance for the provision of sustainable food in North America. The program is expanding to Europe and parts of Africa
    - Data collected by the Wild Harvest Initiative indicate that some 61.1 million wild animals are harvested for food in North America each year providing an estimated 1.4 billion meals to families

- Updates on IUCN and CBD (Deb Hahn, AFWA)
    - The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is updating some policies on sustainable wildlife use.
    - The International Relations Committee and the Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee will stay informed about these potential changes and provide input as needed to ensure that policies continue to protect and promote the sustainable use of wildlife.
    - The Center for Biological Diversity COP will take place October 19-26, 2026 in Armenia. The draft global guidance on sustainable wildlife use is being closely watched by AFWA and other groups.

- Safari Club International (Bee Frederick, SCI)
    - Safari Club International provided an update on litigation regarding numerous species and current challenges some states are facing in terms of management, harvest, and sustainable use.
    - Of notable concern are challenges to trapping and fur sales in Colorado and management of mountain lions in Arizona.
    - President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14425, titled “Supporting America’s Ranchers,” on September 4, 2026, which directs federal agencies to reevaluate endangered species protections for gray wolves and Mexican gray wolves to assist livestock producers.
    - Legislative action regarding wolves continues to require engagement as the courts have ruled that the US FWS must reconsider relisting wolves in the

Northern Rocky Mountain Region. For more details see: SCI In Center Of Western Wolves Fight - Safari Club

- Florida Black Bears-Florida held a conservative black bear hunt which was challenged. The challenge was dismissed by a Florida court.
- Catalina Island Mule Deer Eradication- a hearing is scheduled next week to stop the eradication effort, but the eradication will likely occur despite efforts to stop it.
- Grizzly Bears- proposed 4D rule would allow incidental take and more hazing efforts. This should benefit state management.

- Best Management Practices for Trapping Program (Matt Lovallo, PA Game Commission)
  - Continues to help states maintain trapping as a wildlife management technique and as an acceptable form of sustainable wildlife use through science-based research and public messaging.
  - AFWA genuinely appreciates the continued support of USDA-APHIS-WS- National Wildlife Research Center and our many state, tribal, and NGO partners.

- Canadian Trap Testing and Certification Program (Mike O'Brien, Fur Institute of Canada)
  - The Canadian program continues to evaluate traps and trapping techniques to implement the AIHTS across Canada.

- Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow Program (Dave Windsor, Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation)
  - Dave Windsor indicated that CLFT has a very productive year planned and will continue to provide education to agency staff about the importance of hunting in wildlife management
  - US FWS Director Brian Nesvik pledged that 100 US FWS staff will attend CLfT in 2027. AFWA and CLfT very much appreciate this decision.

- Office of Conservation Investment (Matt Hogan/Matt Filsinger, USFWS)
  - Matt Filsinger provided an update on the operations and some leadership changes in OCI.
    - Principal Deputy Director Jay Shirley has retired, and Tyler Kellog will take his place
    - Tom Decker took a deferred retirement and will officially leave service in October.
  - The Partner with a Payer Program has conducted 88 events with conservation partners with over 1,500 attendees to provide understanding to those who pay and use excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, archery equipment and other hunting accessories.
    - This is important because state conservation and shooting facilities benefit greatly from this excise tax.
  -

- Roundtable Discussion with remaining time

- Little time was left for discussion but a key suggestion the Committee will likely follow up on is to consider a small forum in which to discuss the current challenges to sustainable wildlife