

## Conservation Committee

**Committee Members:** A. H. Ali, B. S. Arbogast, C. Aylward, E. Baerwald, P. Barboza, E. Beever, B. J. Bergstrom, G. Ceballos, J. A. Cook (Chair), K. Counsell, A. D. Davidson, N. G. Dawson, N. De la Sancha, M. A. Dyck, A.W. Ferguson, A. T. Ford, M. Gantchoff, B. J. Gaston, A. J. Giordano, J. Gonzalez-Maya, A.-M. Hodge, R. L. Honeycutt, M. Hughes, J. Koprowski, A. Krevitz, J. Malaney, R. A. Medellin, R. A. Ojeda, L. A. Randa, M. H. Schadler, S. R. Sheffield, K. Smith, W. Smith, M. E. Tewes, N. Upham, E. Wilson.

### **Mission:**

The Conservation Committee (CC) was established by the ASM in 1927, a few years after the Society passed a resolution condemning the unscientific and propagandistic extermination campaign against predators at its 4<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in 1924. First known as the Conservation of Land Mammals Committee, the committee's name was changed to the Conservation Committee in 2002 to reflect the fact that it dealt with conservation issues that included all mammals. In 2002–2003, the Aldo Leopold Conservation Award subcommittee that CC had recently established was moved to full standing committee status. The CC promotes research, education, and science-based solutions to conservation and management of native mammals in North America and globally.

### **Information Items:**

(1) The ASM Conservation Committee welcomed 10 new members in 2017.

(2) Activities of the ASM CC from July 2017 to June 2018 included:

- (a) In July 2017, ASM CC worked with Colin Groves and drafted a letter that was delivered to President Sikes to be sent to the European and the American Associations of Zoos and Aquaria regarding the conservation of the endangered Przewalski's horse (*Equus przewalskii*), and in particular the maintenance of the A-line of this species. We respectfully acknowledge the passing of Dr. Groves in November 2017, a scientist who brought this issue to our attention and who devoted his life to improving our understanding of the systematics and conservation of artiodactyls and perissodactyls.
- (b) In early August 2017, ASM sent a position letter drafted by ASM Conservation Committee, and signed by President Sikes, to the Federal Subsistence Board in Anchorage, Alaska requesting that they (1) reject the proposed increase in annual harvest rate threshold to 30%; (2) instruct the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to issue an emergency order (EO) closing Game Management Unit 2 (GMU2) to the hunting, trapping, or other take of wolves until the wolf population there can be verified to exceed 200 animals on the low end of the estimate range; and (3) instruct the U.S. Forest Service to cease the construction of new roads and clearing of old growth forests on its lands within GMU2, including those of the Big Thorne project.
- (c) In late August 2017, we worked with the Society for Conservation Biology North America to draft a position letter to the US Fish and Wildlife Service urging additional study on the taxonomic status of the Florida Panther (*Puma concolor coryi*) due to conflicting results of

morphological and genetic analyses. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determine that the Florida panther no longer warrants recognition as a distinct subspecies (which we believe would be premature).

- (d) We then worked with the Society for Conservation Biology North America to draft a position letter to the US Fish and Wildlife Service in response to a comment period on the Draft Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, First Revision. The letter focused on (1) limiting recovery to only areas south of Interstate 40 in Arizona and New Mexico; (2) using a high threshold for acceptable extinction risk; (3) absence of objective and measurable recovery criteria at the down-listing and delisting stages; and (4) proposing that Arizona and New Mexico have veto power over releases and translocations.
- (e) The ASM Conservation Committee agreed to organize and sponsor a conservation-based symposium at each Annual Meeting. In 2018 (first available date), we will host a Bat Conservation Symposium (Baerwald). In 2019, at the Washington DC meeting we have proposed a symposium entitled: “*100 Years of Mammal Conservation: Where We’ve Been, Where We’re Headed.*”
- (f) For the 2020 ASM Annual Meeting, there is interest in an ESA or Public Lands themed symposium and in holding a workshop related to communicating science for effective wildlife policy.
- (g) The ASM Conservation Committee drafted a resolution that was sent to the ASM Resolutions Committee in mid-April “On the Impact of the Loss Public Lands Protections On Wild Mammal Populations in the United States.”
- (h) The ASM Conservation Committee continues to monitor the recovery status of several endangered (or threatened) mammals in North America including several wolves, Mexican Gray Wolf, Alexander Archipelago and Red Wolf (*C. lupus*), the vaquita porpoise (*Phocoena sinus*), and other species.
- (i) The ASM Conservation Committee, through Perry Barboza, was included in an Amicus Brief challenging the US Forest Service’s continued artificial feeding of elk at Alkali Creek. These feed grounds could create significant risk for epidemics, such as Chronic Wasting Disease, which could devastate elk herds and damage the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.
- (j) ASM CC compiled a list of ASM members who are also members of IUCN Specialist Groups (Sheffield), and that work is ongoing.

(3) Position letters and resolutions (after passage) can be read on the ASM Conservation Committee’s web page: <http://www.mammalsociety.org/committees/conservation#tab3>

(4) The ASM Conservation Committee maintains a social media presence with regular posting on two FaceBook accounts (ASM Conservation Committee—one public, one for members) and @AsmConservation Twitter account—The Twitter account tweeted out >200 times to ~250 followers over the past year. We encourage ASM membership to join these efforts and help us update social media by sending new content as appropriate.

**Action Items:** None.

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
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