

Conservation Committee

Committee Members: A. A. Ahlers, L. C. Arias, B. S. Arbogast, B. J. Bergstrom (Chair), A. Cheeseman, A. D. Davidson, N. Dawson, A. W. Ferguson, A. T. Ford, B. J. Gaston, A. J. Giordano, R. L. Honeycutt, T. J. Jessen, D. M. Kaufman, J. Malaney, R. A. Medellin, A. Morzillo, R. A. Ojeda, E. E. Posthumus, L. A. Randa, S. R. Sheffield, W. Tubbs, N. Upham.

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 4th 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 CC welcomed new members Adam Ahlers, Amanda Cheeseman, Rodney Honeycutt, Dawn Kaufman, Jason Malaney, Erin Posthumus, Wendy Tubbs, and Nate Upham in 2012-2013.

(2) Activities of the ASM CC during 2012-2013:

(a) The CC sponsored a 90-min public forum on federal wildlife control at the 2012 ASM meeting in Reno, at which the Associate Deputy Administrator of USDA-APHIS for Wildlife Services (WS), the Western Region Director of WS, the Director of WS's National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC), and NWRC Logan, UT, Field Station Director answered questions from committee members and other meeting attendees. The forum was covered for the Sacramento Bee by Tom Knudson:

<http://www.sacbee.com/2012/06/30/4601217/wildlife-services-meets-with-its.html>

(b) In June 2012, CC and ASM President Mike Mares collaborated with Society for Conservation Biology and Society for Ecosystem Restoration on a letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Ashe, urging an expedited peer review of the recovery plan for the Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*), whose fragile recovery is threatened, and offering the expertise of our societies on the recovery planning team.

http://mammalsociety.org/uploads/committee_files/MexicanWolfLetter.pdf

ASM received a reply in late July 2012 from USFWS Southwest Regional Director Nicholopolous, stating his opinion that such a review was premature, and apparently declining our offer to be included on the recovery team. He did commit that, after gathering data on habitat suitability from Mexico, a draft revised recovery plan would be sent out for peer and public review in 2013 with a targeted completion date of 2014:

http://mammalsociety.org/uploads/committee_files/MexicanWolfReplyLetter_0.pdf

(c) In September 2012, CC drafted a position letter, approved and signed by President Ed Heske, commenting on the Environmental Assessment for collaboration between Oregon Division of Fish and Wildlife and USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services on lethal and non-lethal control of gray wolves in an effort to control depredation of livestock. ASM argued for prioritized use of preventive, non-lethal methods of control:

http://mammalsociety.org/uploads/committee_files/OregonEnvAssessWildlifeServices.pdf

(d) Several members of CC prepared a manuscript for peer-reviewed publication detailing the possible direct and indirect effects of WS's lethal control of predators and prairie dogs in the West, arguing for cost-benefit analysis and a thorough environmental assessment of its programs.

(e) CC has organized a special thematic session on predator control for this year's meeting in Philadelphia, with presenters from NWRC, NGOs, and academia speaking about effects of lethal and non-lethal control of predators.

(f) CC submitted a position letter to the USFWS, approved and signed by President Heske, supporting the listing of the wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) in the lower 48 states under the Endangered Species Act.

Action Items: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Brad Bergstrom, Chair
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