

International Relations Committee

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Mission:

The Board of Directors established the International Relations Committee in 1960 to maintain and enhance communication between members of the Society and mammalogists outside North America. The mission of this Committee is to advance the field of mammalogy by encouraging and facilitating international collaboration among members of the ASM and mammalogists from other countries.

Information Items:

A- Ongoing initiatives:

1). Sponsored Membership Program: The International Relations Committee continues to receive nominations and requests for processing sponsored memberships. Currently the program is focusing on students from Latin America and Africa, especially from sub-Saharan Africa. Most nominations are coming from IRC members and known personally by them. These nominated persons range in experience from outstanding doctoral students to senior mammalogists, although most are students or professionals early in their careers. Many of these candidates have been successfully processed and are being sponsored with sponsored members constituting roughly 10% of the ASM memberships. Regular ASM members are strongly encouraged to nominate suitable potential young individuals for sponsored memberships. Because most sponsored members are students or early in their careers, the cost of ASM membership is a hardship for them. Either they do not have credit cards with which to pay their dues, they live in countries that prohibit foreign currency exchange, or the countries make it expensive to send foreign currency. The Sponsored Membership Fund which covers annual dues for many sponsored memberships is critical to the success of this sponsored membership program. ASM members are encouraged to donate regularly to the Sponsored Membership Fund, easily found on the ASM website (<http://www.mammalogy.org/>).

In addition to the IRC efforts at finding worthy individuals for sponsored memberships, many ASM members also sponsor individuals independently of this program. Clearly any such multiple-year sponsorship commitments from donating members are always helpful, and additional sponsorships by members outside of the IRC program are always welcome. Finally, the IRC would like to thank those individuals who donated to the ASM's Sponsored Membership Fund that helps cover the dues of sponsored members, those regular ASM members who have

committed to directly cover the dues of selected individuals for sponsorship, and those individuals who submit the names of outstanding students to be considered for this program.

2). Links to Mammal Societies of the World: Committee members continue to serve as contacts with mammal societies throughout the world, providing information on mammal meetings to appear on the ASM website and in the *Journal of Mammalogy* and other international publications. Major updating of the web pages on the ASM website continues to be done concerning changes in the officers and both names and addresses of international mammal societies and announcements of their annual meetings and symposia. This is an ongoing task and especially difficult with numerous cancellations occurring. We are looking for volunteers to assist in this interesting and important task, namely to help collect and maintain an up-to-date list of links to the mammal societies of the world, meetings and symposia. Contact the IRC co-chairs if interested.

For more interactions with international activities, among others, in mammalogy, members are also invited to join Facebook's American Society of Mammalogists' site at:
https://www.facebook.com/American.Society.of.Mammalogists/?hc_ref=ARS7MI-9G2bFyEZxI08U3TMdK5DsRT8hcheVJdU8cZIA_zD1nJA2AOm5UNuNi5SSvx0&fref=nf
<http://www.facebook.com/American.Society.of.Mammalogists?fref=ts>

3). International Meetings and the International Federation of Mammalogists (IFM): The ASM in collaboration with the University of Alaska extended a successful invitation to host the next IMC at Anchorage, Alaska, in July, 2021. Details of the next IMC-13 can be found at [???](#). The International Relations Committee conducted a travel award program for ASM students to assist them in attending the last two IMCs, namely IMC-11 in Belfast and IMC-12 in Perth. A similar travel award program to assist international ASM students to assist them in attending the joint ASM/IMC-13 meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, in 2021. Check New Initiative B(3) and Action Item 3 below for details and a request for \$5000 to cover five travel awards to be given to International ASM students to present at the next IMC-13.

The IFM maintains a presence on Facebook which can be accessed at International Federation of Mammalogists https://www.facebook.com/groups/197157050399156/?ref=br_rs. Members are invited to join this site for more information on the Federation's activities and are reminded to read the annual report from the IFM as well.

4). ASM Student Award for Latin American Mammal Societies: Because of its international reputation, international students place a high value on being associated with the ASM. The IRC has been expanding the Latin American student award program beyond the program with SAREM (Argentina) and AEM (Ecuador) student awards to include a similar student award program for the rest of the current national mammal societies in Latin America. IRC members Noé de la Sancha, James Kenagy and Co-chair Andrea Previtali with the assistance of other IRC members have contacted the various societies and continue to get commitments from them. A certificate for the award in English, Spanish, and Portuguese was developed to aid in the visualization of this program and to facilitate and standardize the way it is communicated. In that sense, the description was used to communicate the characteristics of the program to the presidents of the Latin American mammal societies and to the awardees.

During the IRC committee meeting at the 99th Annual Meeting of the ASM, it was decided to name this award the “**Carol and James Patton Award**”. This decision was made in recognition of the generous contribution that Carol and Jim Patton made to endowing the annual costs of this program. The new name also intends to recognize the work and efforts made by this couple towards promoting the growth of the field of mammalogy in Latin American countries. The endowment means that funds for this program will never come from the General Reserve Fund income.

The Carol and James Patton Award goes to one outstanding student from each of the affiliated mammal societies in Latin America. Each year, the participating Society provides the name of a student selected based on criteria established by each society, generally the best student oral or poster presentation given at their annual scientific meeting. The award consists of three consecutive years of online membership to the ASM including the signature publications *Journal of Mammalogy* and *Mammalian Species* and provides access to the numerous membership benefits.

The Latin American national mammal societies that are participating in this program are as follows: **Argentina**: Sociedad Argentina para el Estudio de los Mamíferos (SAREM); **Bolivia**: Red Boliviana de Mastozoología (RBM); **Brazil**: Sociedade Brasileira de Mastozoología (SMBz); **Colombia**: Sociedad Colombiana de Mastozoología (SCMas); **Ecuador**: Asociación Ecuatoriana de Mastozoología (AEM); and **Paraguay**: Asociación Paraguaya de Mastozoología (APM). Some societies only have a biannual scientific meeting. Efforts continue to be made to get the remaining Latin American societies involved from **El Salvador**: Grupo de Trabajo de Mastozoología de El Salvador (GTMES); **Guatemala**: Asociación Guatemalteca de Mastozoólogos (ASOGUAMA); **Mexico**: Asociación Mexicana de Mastozoología (AMMAC); **Panama**: Sociedad Mastozoológica de Panamá (SOMASPA); **Peru**: Sociedad Peruana de Mastozoología (SPM); and **Venezuela**: Asociación Venezolana para el Estudio de los Mamíferos (AsoVEM).

The awardees for the 2019 Carol and James Patton Award are as follows: **Jorge Gallo** for the Sociedad Argentina para el Estudio de los Mamíferos (SAREM) from Delegación Regional Patagonia, Administración de Parques Nacionales, Argentina; **Raissa Prior Migliorini** for the Sociedade Brasileira de Mastozoología (SMBz) from Universidade Federal do Pampa, Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil; and **Myriam Velázquez** for the Asociación Paraguaya de Mastozoología (APM) from Fundación Moisés Bertoni, Asunción, Paraguay.

5). Caribbean Islands Society of Mammalogists (CISM): There continues to be an effort to establish a mammal society among mammalogists who specialize on Caribbean mammals by Rafael Borroto-Paez (borroto@yahoo.com) assisted by Nathan Upham (nathan.upham@yale.edu) and J. Angel Soto-Centeno (angelo.soto@rutgers.edu). They are currently looking into the two mammalogical groups that include individuals from the islands, namely the Red Latinoamericana de Mastozoología (RELAM) versus the Red Latinoamericana para la Conservación de Murciélagos (RELCOM). They are also interested in assistance from any ASM member who might be interested in Caribbean mammals. Contact them if you are interested. Various options are being considered including developing a website focusing on

Caribbean mammalogy, developing a symposium to include a session on the process of initiating this society, establishment of an ASM subgrouping of Caribbean specialists to focus attention on the potential for a new society and emphasizing research in the region, encouraging Caribbean specialists to become more involved in the ASM through sponsored ASM online memberships for those with economic hardships precluding their joining the ASM in an effort to expand substantially regional membership coverage, and assisting at least one Caribbean specialist to attend an annual ASM meeting in future.

6). Development of an African Mammal Society: Currently efforts to initiate an African society of mammalogists are still being pursued by a group of west African mammalogists led by Dr. Blaise Kadjo of l'Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The development of a database of Pan-African individuals who would be interested in such a society continues. Solicitations of interest are being currently distributed as time allows to individuals from Africa but will in time include others from outside of Africa who might be interested in joining. Names, addresses, contact information, and areas of specialty have been received from many persons. Discussions are underway to determine what kind of "society" might best serve the region and whether the initiative should be continental rather than regional, especially after the numerous positive responses received so far. By-Laws patterned after those of the ASM are being developed initially in a bilingual format in English and French. Sources for financial support for an organizational meeting somewhere in Africa are being sought so that as many Africans as possible might be able to attend such an initial meeting.

7). International Colleagues Seeking Information and Advice: International colleagues continue to contact the IRC seeking information and advice. Most queries deal with sources of information on ASM activities (including travel award funding options and membership possibilities), mammals, literature, and educational opportunities. The latter includes advice on which academic institutions might be suitable for graduate training in a specific field of study, not always on mammals, and contact information on potential ASM members who are located at those institutions. This is a new area of service for the IRC and continues to grow in need.

8). Symposium on Recent Advances in the Conservation of African Mammals: Along with the sponsoring African Graduate Student Research Fund Committee, the International Relations Committee together with the ASM's Conservation and Human Diversity committees are co-sponsoring the effort to organize a symposium entitled, "Recent advances in the conservation of African mammals" at the 2021 joint American Society of Mammalogists–International Mammalogical Congress in Anchorage, Alaska. This symposium would represent an effort to increase exposure of meeting attendees to historically-underrepresented geographic regions, and attendance by mammalogists from said regions. With the Board's support, it is our intent that this symposium would represent the first in a longer-term commitment by the ASM to promote global diversity of mammalogists and mammalogy. A request is being considered for the next ASM budgetary cycle for the ASM Board to consider matching funds for up to \$9000, which the Board of Directors unanimously supported in an informal straw poll at the annual meeting in Washington DC, as reflected in the unabridged minutes from last year's meeting. Since this time, our committees have raised \$24,000 for this effort. We ask for the Board's support of an Action Item being submitted by the African Graduate Student Research Fund Committee for \$9000 for this Symposium.

B- New Initiatives:

1). Disposition of Surplus Journals and Other Mammal Reference Materials: Various institutions and ASM members have requested that the IRC help in an effort to disperse journals and other mammalian reference materials to institutions in developing countries rather than dispose of them or recycle the paper. Initially, countries in Africa and Latin America have been targeted by the donors. Three problems with this effort are being explored: Finding institutions in the various countries that are interested in receiving this reference material; finding funds to pay to ship large amounts of heavy bound journals and reference books to developing countries; and finding shipping companies which ship such freight internationally. Lists of potential institutions in Africa and Latin America that might be interested are being generated. Currently a potential program at the US AID that ships resource materials to developing countries is being pursued. With an aging ASM membership who still have hard copy reference libraries but may wish at some point to downsize in retirement and institutional libraries facing space and budgetary problems while converting to electronic copies of publications, this program has the potential to grow.

2). Sponsorship of Latin American Mammal Congress: The next Latin American Mammal Congress will be hosted by the Peruvian Mammal Society and held in Lima, Peru, in 2021. Like previous Congresses, although a regional one, this Congress has an international attendance and is probably second in importance to the IMC conferences in the number of attendees and importance to mammalogists. Certainly, interest in Neotropical mammalogy is second in importance to an interest in North American mammalogy to members of the ASM even though the ASM has an international membership. In addition to numerous attendees from various Latin American countries, it is attended by numerous Neotropical mammalogists from Europe and North America. The ASM's sponsorship of the last Congress in 2018 in La Paz was vital in supporting a successful Congress, especially in supplying early seed money so critical for such international meetings. In Action Item (1) below, the IRC is asking the Board of Directors to again support the next Latin American Mammal Congress in Peru with a grant of \$3000.

3). International Student Travel Support for IMC-13: Since the next International Mammal Congress (IMC-13) is scheduled to be a joint meeting with the annual meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists in Anchorage, Alaska, in July, 2021, the International Relations Committee proposes to develop another student travel award program similar to the ones done for the previous two IMCs in Belfast and Perth. An Action Item (2) requesting \$5000 from the ASM Board is presented below. The program will be administered by an *ad-hoc* committee of senior IRC members in a similar competitive program as that used to award similar travel assistance to ASM students traveling to IMC-11 and IMC-12. Since this meeting will be a normal annual meeting for ASM, the program will not be open to students from the USA or Canada but rather to all international undergraduate and graduate students as well as any person whose terminal degree was already awarded within the past five years from July, 2021. International students attending school in the USA or Canada will be eligible as well. Five awards of \$1000 each will be awarded which can be used to leverage additional travel funds for other sources.

The Committee welcomes new initiatives from any ASM members. The co-chairs would like to thank all Committee members for their support and commitment, especially to those who have submitted names of individuals to be considered for sponsored memberships, helped in the continuing efforts to develop the student awards for Latin American mammal societies, and contributed to the initiative to establish a Caribbean mammal society and an African mammal society. Thanks to all!

Action Items (2):

- 1). Move that the Board of Directors budget \$3000 for an ASM sponsorship of the next Latin American Mammal Congress in Lima, Peru, in 2021. See entry B (2) above under New Initiatives for justification of this request.

- 2). Move that the Board of Directors budget \$5,000 for five travel grant awards to be given to International ASM students to present at the IMC-13 in Alaska in 2021. See entry B (3) above under New Initiatives for justification of this request.

Respectfully submitted,

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