

Conservation Committee

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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 ASM Conservation Committee welcomed 11 new members in 2018.

(2) Activities of the ASM CC from June 2018 to April 2019 included:

(a) The ASM CC organized the Bat Conservation Symposium held at the 98th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists and heard a series of talks focused on mortality due to white-nose syndrome and wind energy as well as novel efforts to increase awareness and conservation of this highly diverse group (e.g., bat friendly tequila). Following the ASM meeting in Manhattan, Kansas, members of the ASM CC produced a press release summarizing the major findings of the symposium.

(b) In late July 2018, ASM sent a position letter drafted by ASM Conservation Committee, and signed by President Kelt, that addressed the inadequacy of the Environmental Assessment (EA) proposal to consider modifying the existing red wolf management plan. The letter stated that all four proposed alternatives appear unlikely to promote the development of viable wild populations of red wolves and that instead the USFWS should place a renewed emphasis on conservation in the wild by focusing on the original Red Wolf Recovery Plan (USFWS 1989)

(c) In late August 2018, we helped to circulate a scientist sign on letter to The National Park Service related to their proposal to amend its regulations for sport hunting and trapping in national preserves in Alaska. Proposed changes would remove a regulatory provision issued

by the National Park Service in 2015 that prohibited certain sport hunting practices that are otherwise permitted by the State of Alaska. Our Society is on record as opposing many of the state's predator-control policies, and this would be a big step backwards on NPS's part.

(d) In September and early October 2018, we led a collaborative effort with the Society for Conservation Biology North America (SCBNA), and the American Ornithological Society (AOS) that commented on proposed changes to the regulations guiding the implementation of Endangered Species Act, including the revisions to the regulations for interagency cooperation, revisions related to listing species and designating critical habitat, and the recession of the 4(d) regulations for threatened wildlife and plants.

(e) The ASM Conservation Committee drafted a resolution that was sent to the ASM Resolutions Committee in mid-April 2018 “On the Impact of the Loss Public Lands Protections On Wild Mammal Populations in the United States.” Several rounds of revisions have taken place since then and a final document has been sent to President Kelt for reading at the 2019 ASM Annual Meeting.

(f) In January and February 2019, ASM CC coordinated the distribution of a “scientist sign-on” letter to the Bureau of Land Management in regard to its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the proposed Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program required by Congress. This letter (at the link below) expresses opposition from scientists and resource managers to oil and gas activity in the Arctic Refuge and identifies flaws in the DEIS, including gaps in the scientific baseline, conflicts with other Refuge purposes, inadequate analysis of the impacts (including global climate change), and failure to offer a reasonable range of alternatives.

(g) The ASM CC is now drafting a position letter in response to the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s plan to delist gray wolves.

(h) The ASM CC is drafting and will help coordinate either an ASM Presidential Letter or the distribution of a “scientist sign-on” letter to the current federal effort to rollback the *Roadless Rule on the Tongass National Forest*.

(i) 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.

(j) ASM CC continues to monitor and compile a list of ASM members who are also members of IUCN Specialist Groups and that work is ongoing.

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

The ASM Conservation Committee maintains a social media presence with regular posting on two FaceBook accounts (ASM Conservation Committee—one public, one for members only)

and @AsmConservation Twitter account—We encourage ASM membership to join these efforts and help us update social media by sending new conservation content as appropriate.

Action Items: None.

(1) Through an initiative stemming from the African Graduate Student Research Fund, Human Diversity, and International Relations committees, the ASM CC requests that the ASM Board begin to consider allocating matching funds (of up to \$10,000 raised) to support a symposium “Recent Advances in the Conservation of African Mammals” at the 2021 joint American Society of Mammalogists-International Mammalogical Congress in Anchorage, AK. We realize this amount would need to be appropriated in the next fiscal cycle, so this is simply an informational item at this time. This symposium would represent a renewed commitment to increase exposure of meeting attendees to historically-underrepresented geographic regions (Africa in this case), as well as increase attendance by mammalogists from biodiverse regions. It is our intent that this symposium would represent the first in a longer-term commitment by the ASM to promote conservation of global diversity that would include active engagement in the development of human capacity and infrastructure in mammalogy in developing, biodiverse countries.

Respectfully Submitted,

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