

Membership Committee

Committee Members: J. Brant, S. Carroll (Chair), E. Finck, M. Gannon, J. Hanson, M. Haynie, K. Phelps, D. Rogers, H. Smith, S. Westerman, and S. Weyandt.

Mission:

The Membership Committee tracks current membership trends in the Society and is involved with both membership recruitment and retention. In addition, the committee works with Allen Press to correct membership bookkeeping problems that arise.

Information Items:

(1) Current membership figures as reported to the Membership Committee from Allen Press on 15 April 2009 are shown on the following pages of this report.

Readers should note that numbers reported here are different from numbers reported in previous membership reports. Delinquent members paying back dues for membership often cause those membership figures to increase even though the calendar year is over.

Type	Description	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
ENJ	Emeritus Member-No Journal	158	158	154	149	146
HONOR	Honorary Member	11	12	12	13	13
HONORNJ	Honorary Member-No Journal	1	1	1	1	1
HONORPATRON	Honorary and Patron		2	2	3	3
LIF	Life Member	633	637	636	627	623
LIF	Life Member-Full Payment	6	1	0	1	0
LIF06	Life Member			3	5	7
LIF06	Life Member- Full Payment		3	0	1	4
LIF106	Life Member- 1st Install	5				
LIF106	Life Member- 1st Install		6	8	5	5
LIF2	Life Member- 2nd Install	8	4			
LIF206	Life Member- 2nd Install			6	7	5
LIF3	Life Member-3rd Installment	8	6	2	1	0
LIF306	Life Member- 3rd Install		2	0	6	5
LIF4	Life Member-4th Installment	6	8	6	2	1
LIF406	Life Member- 4th Install			2	0	6
LIFNJ	Life Member-No Journal	12	14	15	21	22
MEM	Member	1486	1466	1323	1258	937
MEMDEV	Member Developing Country		45	47	51	49
MEMNJ	Member-No Journal	2				
MEMO	Member- Online Only		125	212	229	262
PATR	Patron Member	64	62	60	58	58

PATR NJ	Patron Member-No Journal	1	1	2	2	2
SPONS	Sponsored Member		37	16	33	12
SPONSO	Online Only Sponsored member			1	1	1
STUD	Student Member	543	552	484	448	318
STUDLIF106	Student Life- 1st Installment	13	2	0	3	1
STUDLIF2	Student Life- 2nd Installment		9			
STUDLIF206	Student Life- 2nd Installment		1	2	0	1
STUDLIF3	Student Life Member-3rd Instal			7	0	0
STUDLIF306	Student Life- 3rd Installment			0	2	0
STUDLIF4	Student Life Member-4th Instal			0	4	0
STUDLIF406	Student Life- 4th Installment			0	1	2
STUDLIF5	Student Life Member-5th Instal			0	0	4
STUDO	Student online only		22	22	38	52
TOTAL		2957	3176	3023	2970	2540

In addition, these numbers should differ from those in the annual report of the Secretary/Treasurer. That report contains all members who are still on the roster, including those that are three years or less delinquent in dues payment. The numbers above include only those members who are active and have paid dues for that year.

We saw an overall decrease of 53 members for 2008, continuing the downward trend that began in 2007, and membership is down significantly in 2009. In April 2008, at the time that the report was written, we had 2,785 members as compared to 2,540 in April of this year. This is a decrease of 245 members for 2009 when compared to the same period in 2008. If we rely on patterns from recent years, we should expect to see an overall decrease of approximately 200 members by the end of 2009. Factors likely include the increasing availability of the Journal of Mammalogy through institutional subscriptions and other online access points, as well as the economic downturn.

(2) Sponsored Membership – The Sponsored Membership Program is now in its 6th year. The numbers of sponsored members reported with this year’s data are not consistent with numbers reported in past years and presented in past membership reports. We will work with Allen Press to correct these numbers and get an accurate accounting of this program.

Number of sponsored members from 2004-2008 (according to ASM records):

- 2004: 23
- 2005: 45
- 2006: 40
- 2007: 38
- 2008: 35

At this time, 14 members have been sponsored for 2009. We have 16 unfilled sponsored memberships and are in need of nominations from the membership. The numbers of instances of (1) individuals not receiving journals and (2) sponsored members receiving

renewal notices rather than the sponsors continues to decrease as we work to ensure that the program operates smoothly.

We are also working with the International Relations Committee to update the program guidelines and answer concerns presented to us about the program from sponsors.

(3) We are working with the Education and Graduate Students Committee to make the annual meeting friendlier to first time attendees (primarily students) with the hope that they will choose to attend future meetings and retain their membership.

Action Items:

(1) The Membership Committee, composed of members from all aspects of ASM membership, requests the President, President-Elect, and the Board consider the points below as action items:

(a) Given the decreasing membership numbers and increasing availability of the *Journal of Mammalogy* through other sources, members of the committee propose that additional benefits or incentives be considered to retain members and encourage new members. Some ideas for consideration include:

- (1) Discounts for annual meeting registration to ASM members.
- (2) Centralized, inexpensive annual meeting locations during the tough economic times so that new members, especially students, are more likely to join and participate in the society.
- (3) Temporary membership drive with reduced rates. At the very least, the committee would recommend that no new dues increases be considered for the next two years.
- (4) Page fees for non-members publishing in the *Journal of Mammalogy* and page fee waivers for ASM members.

(b) Online voting or ballot voting—currently, elections are held at annual meetings and only those members who can attend the meeting are allowed to participate. Each year, roughly one fifth of our membership attends the annual meeting. Many members are students or live internationally and cannot afford to attend meetings on a regular basis. Thus, the vast majority of our members are not permitted, under present rules, to nominate officers and participate in the voting process. Many societies have changed to mail or electronic voting for officers and board members, so all of the members have an opportunity to participate in elections and governance of the society. ASM members, as well as the Membership Committee, feel strongly that members of the ASM should be allowed to remain involved in Society business even during years that they are unable to travel to the annual meeting. Members would like the opportunity to participate in choosing leaders as well as meeting localities.

This aspect could be considered as an additional incentive, as discussed in item

(a) above. If the *Journal of Mammalogy* is no longer an incentive for Society membership due to its wide availability, then additional membership benefits (such as the ability to vote) become increasingly important. We ask the Board and Officers of ASM to consider this point, address it with the members (both those who can attend the meeting this year as well as those who do not), and strongly consider a change in the bylaws that allows all members to vote in elections.

(c) The Membership Committee maintains a portable membership display available to members who can take it to regional or international meetings to promote membership in the ASM. The committee requests a budget of \$100 to cover the postage costs associated with mailing the display.

Respectfully submitted,

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