

International Relations Committee - Report

Meeting of January 8, 2024
Ryan Brown (Virginia), Co-chair
Christie Curley (Ontario), Co-Chair

Meeting convened from 11:00am to 1:30pm. There were 34 people in attendance.

Upcoming meetings and opportunities:

- Convention on Migratory Species 14th Conference of the Parties: February 12 - 17
- Trilateral Wildlife Committee: April 29 - May 2
- CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) 26: May 13 - 17
- 27th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee: July 8 – 12
- Joint session of the Animals and Plants Committees: July 12 - 13
- 33rd meeting of the CITES Animals Committee: July 15 – 19

Social Acceptance of Hunting (Tristan Breijer, FACE): Tristan presented the results of [European Federation for Hunting and Conservation's](#) (FACE) work on the social acceptance of hunting. Social acceptance is vital for the continued practice of hunting and the precursor to participation. Gaining public support is crucial for the long-term sustainability of hunting. FACE emphasizes that societal involvement is key to wildlife conservation, biodiversity preservation, and the economic benefits that sustainable hunting brings to local communities. They aim to measure, maintain and multiply social acceptance. FACE has set an ambitious goal to achieve a 70% social acceptance rate for hunting by 2027. This involves data collection through standardized surveys, awareness-raising campaigns, and educational initiatives aimed at changing the public discourse around hunting. The studies so far have shown that you are more likely to support hunting if you are familiar with hunting. Education levels effect acceptance levels but the impacts of education depend on the country. One of the main concerns of non-hunter is safety while participating in outdoor recreation during the hunting season. They also are finding that there is a lot of misunderstanding about hunting. They developed unbiased questions using wording that would be most appropriate for a given country. It is acceptable for other people in my country to hunt if they do so legally and in accordance with hunting laws and regulations? They will use the data gathered to conduct outreach and develop best practices for communications. They have not yet looked at linkages between acceptance rates and societal values.

Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) 14th Conference of the Parties (Deb Hahn and Cy Griffin, FACE): The CMS Conference of the Parties (CoP) will meet in February. AFWA will attend and developed a [briefing paper](#). Although the US and Canada are not Parties to CMS, we follow the Convention and engage where necessary because CMS decisions can influence CITES and IUCN decisions and domestic policy. There are species native to the US and Canada listed in Appendix II as well. Numerous agenda items were reviewed by AFWA, state, provincial, and territorial staff; and partners that have specific expertise. The list of items below are our priority issues. The overarching goal is to bring the perspectives of on-the-ground wildlife managers to help ensure resolutions, actions, and decisions are implementable and reasonable and support the conservation of wildlife in the US or Canada and our migratory species. One theme that is evident across documents is an increased focus on domestic trade in CMS-listed species. The Committee will engage with the US State Department and other partners as needed to share our perspectives.

- New Strategic Plan for Migratory Species
- Atlas of Animal Migration
- Assessment of the risk posed to CMS Appendix I-listed species by direct use and trade
- Prevention of illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds
- Preventing poisoning of migratory birds
- Priorities for addressing illegal and unsustainable intentional take
- Terrestrial and avian wild meat
- Wildlife disease
- Conservation implications of animal culture

The illegal and unsustainable take document demonstrates the slow evolution of topics in CMS. In 2014, the resolution was focused on wildlife crime. The draft resolution for consideration at this CoP now uses the wording illegal and unsustainable take and there is more focus on hunting. The document used information based on a generic search of the IUCN Red List that shows hunting threatens over 1,000 species. However, if you dig into the data, you will see that it includes species such as moose and white-tailed deer. Both of which are hunted but not threatened by hunting.

CITES Non-Detriment Findings Workshop (Deb): Non-detriment findings (NDF) are an important part of the CITES process. Essentially, they are a science-based study that assesses whether any trade will have a negative (or detrimental) effect on the survival of that species. An NDF is needed to get a CITES permit. AFWA did not attend the December workshop but received some input from two partners. They felt that overall, the workshop went well. There were many Parties present. There were discussions about and some support for simplified guidance that could be used on low risk cases. This approach has been demonstrated as being successful for some reptile trade. The next step is that the WG leads are putting the finishing touches to their guidance documents, which will then be formatted by IUCN and submitted to CITES for publication in January. The CITES Secretariat will be asking for input from Parties on the utility of the guidance before the next CITES meeting in July. We believe that the Secretariat and possibly IUCN will do field tests with interested parties in the spring. The risk is that the guidance documents will be applied as the standard in the future.

Safari Club International Updates (Jeremy Clare): Canada's ban on the import of elephant ivory and rhino horn, including hunting trophies, went into effect on January 8. This is a ban on all hunting trophies and other products whether acquired legally or not. There are only a handful of elephant and rhino trophies imported annually, and Canada is not known to be an ivory or rhino horn trafficking country. Because of this they felt that the regulatory ban was not necessary and also done without enough consultation. Carolina Caceres, Canadian Wildlife Service, offered to answer any questions about the process they used or the regulations.

CIC Updates (Sebastian Winkler): The CIC with its State Members enjoys a preferential Intergovernmental Organization Observer Status in most of the Multilateral environment agreements and last autumn is also obtained this status within the Ramsar Convention for Wetlands of International Importance. In 2024, CIC will attend the CMS & CBD CoPs as well as CITES and Ramsar meetings and as in the past it looks forward to a close collaboration with AFWA's International Committee in these processes. CIC will also attend the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March where it hopes to meet in person to further elaborate a strategic and impactful collaboration with AFWA in 2024 and beyond as it develops the CIC 2030 Strategic Programme to be adopted at the CIC General Assembly on 18-21 April 2024 in Portugal to which AFWA and its members are most welcome.

Action Items / Resolutions / Motions: Finalize CMS recommendations.

OTHER ITEMS MENTIONED: Wild Sheep Foundation Update: Kazakhstan and Mongolia will meet with the WAFWA sheep working group. They are interested in creating a similar working group for Central Asia. Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks are putting \$4 million into wild sheep research including look at diseases and disease transmission.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED: N/A

Submitted by Ryan Brown and Christie Curley

Committee Member Attendees:

Ryan Brown, Virginia Department of Wildlife Conservation
Christie Curley, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Don Morgan, USFWS
Mike Ielmini, U.S. Forest Service
Will Dillman, South Carolina DNR
Matt Eckert, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Jennifer Sheehan, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
Gordon Batcheller, NEAFWA
Buddy Baker, SEAFWA
Jeremy Clare, Safari Club International
Angela Somma, NMFS
John Jackson, Conservation Force
Carolyn Caldwell, MAFWA
Kurt Alt, Wild Sheep Foundation
Sara Schweitzer, NCWRC

Non-Committee Members Attendees:

Sebastian Winkler, CIC
Marc Cattet, Government of Yukon
Tristan Beijer, FACE
David Scallan, FACE
Cy Griffin, FACE
Elsa Haubold, USFWS
Regina Lennox, Safari Club International
Laura Conlee, Missouri Department of Conservation
Doug Chiasson, Fur Institute of Canada
Caitlin Powell, AFWA
Tom Klein, The Wildlife Society
Joseph Goergen, JAMMA
Matt Elliott, Georgia DNR
Hugh Hunt
Dean Smith, AFWA
Erin Down, CWS ECCC
Carolina Caceres, CWS ECC
Jenna Shinen, US State Department
Lane Kisonak, AFWA

