

## International Relations Committee - Report

Meeting of March 13, 2025  
Ryan Brown (Virginia), Co-chair  
Christie Curley (Ontario), Co-Chair

Meeting convened from 10:15 am to 12:00 pm. There were 20 people in attendance.

Important meetings and opportunities:

- Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) 78<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee: February 3 – 8
- Second Resumed Session of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of the Parties (CoP): February 25 – 27
- IUCN Online discussion of motions: April 21 - June 21
- Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management: May 13-16
- Document Submission Deadline for CITES CoP20: June 27
- Ramsar CoP15: 23 July 23 – 31
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress: October 9 – 15
- CITES CoP20: November 24 - December 5

**International Meetings and Opportunities:** (Deb Hahn, AFWA): The coming year includes key international meetings and opportunities to influence the global conservation agenda and ensure that the state, provincial and territorial priorities and voice are heard. We will also need to review our current strategy depending on how involved the US government ends up being in these international for a.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) will be held from October 9 to 15. Critical actions before and during the WCC are voting for councilors, officers, and Commission chairs and motions. We know IUCN motions can be used to impact decisions in other forums. Additionally, they guide IUCN programming and policy. Currently, the motions are being reviewed to ensure they meet IUCN criteria and are not duplicative. The final accepted motions will be up for online discussion from April 21 to June 21. We will share the list with this committee and bring in other subject experts from our partners in the US and Canada to get input. Most motions will be voted on in August and September.

We plan on reviewing about 30-40 motions. Items of interest include subnational government participation (co-sponsored by AFWA, zoonotic disease and one health, ecological connectivity, indigenous and local communities, sustainable use, amphibian conservation, freshwater ecosystems, connecting people to nature, and the Global Wildlife Economy (co-sponsored by AWFA). There were several sustainable use related motions. It is possible that some will be combined and that if approved with current language could open IUCN's sustainable use policy for review.

The CBD concluded the second resumed session of the CoP. One key decision was the opportunity for non-state actors to submit information about their work to conserve biodiversity and contribute to the Global Biodiversity Framework targets. Additionally, the CBD Secretariat is asking for best practices for sustainable wildlife management, including examples of effective policies, management approaches, governance frameworks, and other measures that contribute to the conservation and sustainable use

of wildlife. Submissions should be accompanied by relevant documentation, including web links to reports or, if not available online, PDF copies of relevant materials. The Committee will discuss how best to engage and partner with the Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee on a response.

The Ramsar Wetland Convention will meet in July. Our primary engagement in Ramsar in recent years has been through the US state department and the Canadian government. Deb Hahn reviewed the resolutions that came out of the Standing Committee and are headed to the CoP. She does not have any concerns but will still review the CoP documents and reach out to the lead for the US State Department.

After the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) CoP we nominated people to be members of two working groups on avian influenza and the taking and use of migratory species.

**CITES Technical Work Group Update** (Buddy Baker (SEAFWA), Gordon Batcheller (NEAFWA), Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA), Stewart Liley (WAFWA))

Every three years, CITES convenes CoP. The AFWA CITES Technical Work Group started preparing for CoP20 early last year. Part of those preparations include working with the US and other partners on potential species proposals, responding to Federal Register Notices and attending meetings. The most recent meeting was the 78<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee. In addition to the Technical Work Group, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and Maine Department of Marine Resources also attended. The focus was to strengthen relationships with sustainable use partners, build connections with Country delegates, and engage in discussions on issues and potential species listing proposals leading up to CoP20. The Team also worked to try and advance a genus wide resolution on *Anguilla* spp. but it was not approved by the Standing Committee. Instead, it will be taken up at CoP20 in fall 2025. For more information about the meeting see the [SC 78 Meeting Report](#).

AFWA submitted a letter in response to the December 2024 [Federal Register notice](#) with our input on the undecided list of native species still being considered for a listing proposal by the USFWS. That included American eels (*Anguilla rostrata*), Horseshoe crabs (*Limulus polyphemus*), Peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*), about 20 species of turtle, Sonoran Desert Toad or Colorado River toad (*Incilius alvarius*), Rattlesnakes (*Crotalus spp.*), Timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*), Western rattlesnake (*Crotalus oreganus*).

In the coming weeks and months, the Work Group continues reaching out to the regional associations and individual states, provinces and territories as needed on key issues likely to be taken up at the next CoP, including species listing proposals. Input from species experts is very important.

**Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW)/Global Wildlife Economy** (Shane Mahoney): The CPW focuses on supporting countries to ensure the use and trade of wildlife is legal, sustainable, and safe; addressing human wildlife conflict and coexistence; embed sustainable use and management of wildlife in the One Health agenda; and advocate for sustainable and inclusive wildlife economies.

The Global Wildlife Economy Assessment is being launched by the UN Environment Program (UNEP). The result will be an assessment of the global wildlife economy. They will use 5 regions to develop scoping studies.

**Prevention of Wildlife Trafficking SB25-168**: [Prevention of Wildlife Trafficking](#) was passed in Colorado. New Mexico and South Carolina have similar bills. The bill adds species that appear in Appendix I to CITES to the wildlife covered under Colorado's wildlife trafficking laws. It also

establishes penalties for violating wildlife trafficking laws.

**Action Items / Resolutions / Motions**

- Engage the Committee and subject matter experts in IUCN Motions discussion, work with global partners to develop
- Outline priorities and key dates for receiving input and hosting virtual committee meetings

**OTHER ITEMS MENTIONED:**

**NEW OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:**

Submitted by Ryan Brown

Committee Member Attendees:

Ryan Brown, Virginia Department of Wildlife Conservation

Mike O'Brien, Fur Institute of Canada

Will Dillman, South Carolina DNR

Stewart Liley, NM Game and Fish Department, WAFWA CITES Representative

Gordon Batcheller, NEAFWA CITES Representative

John Jackson, Conservation Force

Laura Conlee, Missouri Department of Conservation

Jen Sheehan, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Non-Committee Members Attendees:

Glen Salmon, Indiana University

Craig Bruce: Jamma International

Katie MacKenzie: Jamma International

Shane Mahoney, Conservation Visions

Tristan Beijer, CIC

Patricia Dwyer, Canadian Wildlife Federation

John Williams, Canadian Wildlife Federation

Dave Kostersky, DU Canada

Howie Singer, DU Canada

Marnee Roundtree, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Jonathan Pynn, Government of Nunavut-Department of Environment

# TIMELINE

