

## Program Committee

**Committee Members:** P. Connors, K. Bell, M. Arszulowicz, K. Speer, E. Flaherty, B. Blood, B. Kohli, E. Finck, V. Mathis, S. Sheffield, A. Hope, C. Calderon-Acevedo, V. Turner, L. Merkle, M. McGowen, C. Aylward, L. Walsh, E. Siracusa, M. Dyck, S. Lamb, L. Alexander, C. Hedeberg, K. Lyons, J. Rachlow and J.D. Hanson

**Mission:** The Program Committee is responsible for the solicitation and acceptance of proposals for symposia and workshops, for advertising the meeting to other scientific societies, for soliciting bids to host meetings, and assisting meeting hosts in preparing for annual meetings. In 2011, the committee was charged with venue selection, organizing the annual meeting, the solicitation and acceptance of proposals for symposia and workshops, and advertising the meeting to other scientific societies.

### Information Items:

#### (1) Sponsors & Exhibitors

2025--- Vendor solicitation continues to be difficult. Many businesses, government agencies, museums, and universities were contacted. Efforts were also made to solicit local artisans. We also made an effort to reach out to industry members whose primary focus may not be selling but recruiting employees at the meeting. We have 10 vendors/sponsors. Some potential sponsors, while expressing strong interest in participating, were unable to participate due to stress of the current administration and cancellation of other grants and funding. This year James Ryan stepped down as the subcommittee chair for this and the primary effort was performed by Kerrell Dunsmore and the Next Great Event Team. Given the size of our meeting and the cost to travel and attend, we believe we are not as enticing an opportunity for as many potential sponsors. We have tried to be creative with the benefits we offer such as allowing vendors to sponsor lunch workshops and next year we are planning to experiment with a new format for sponsorship offerings to pick and choose the benefits that are most beneficial to them given their specific business models.

Given the low return rate, it is the continued recommendation of the Program Committee to consider establishing long-term relationships with companies that have histories with the Society (e.g., H.B. Sherman, Tomahawk, etc.), as well as large companies that deem us too small and specialized to sponsor the meeting (e.g., Fisher Scientific, Garmin, Sigma-Aldrich, etc.). Annual corporate sponsorship could provide financial support in exchange for advertising options on the website, in the journal(?), and at the meeting (vendor show and auction). Leadership from the Strategic Planning Committee would help in this regard, creating a corporate donor pool for campaigns. The Program Committee stands ready to discuss how this might be implemented to the benefit of the entire Society.

2026---Discussions for sponsorships will begin for the Norfolk meeting immediately following the Purdue meeting. The 2026 brochure will be distributed to sponsors and exhibitors this summer with an invitation letter signed by the Society President. Efforts will

focus on identifying local university sponsors, government agencies, and local businesses with interest in providing vending options.

## **(2) Website & Social Media**

2025---The Program Committee under the Communications Subcommittee led by Patrice Connors and members Camilo Calderon, Brooks Kohli, and Erin Siracusa is still managing the [mammalsmeeting.org](http://mammalsmeeting.org) domain. There have been discussions about bringing this domain under the purview of the Communications/Informatics Committee and those are still ongoing. Until that is finalized, we will continue to maintain that page. Additionally this year, the Program Committee made the decision to delete our X/Twitter account and have moved our social media presence to other platforms.

## **(3) Registration**

2025— We were hopeful that the Purdue meetings would be a relatively large meeting given the lower cost, central location, university location, and extensive offerings. As of 6/23/2025 there were 397 registered attendees including 132 regular members, 158 student members, 17 non-members, 31 student non-members, 16 developing country, 6 one day, 6 ASM Funded Speakers, 3 Complimentary (board supported), 5 Rising undergraduates in mammalogy, 13 Volunteers, and 5 sponsors. This number is lower than our normal average (410) but well within a margin. We attribute the lower than expected numbers to the effects of the policies put forth by the administration that 1) cancelled or reduced a number of grants and jobs 2) made travel by international attendees difficult 3) caused non-citizen residents to weigh the risks of air and long distance ground transportation.

## **(4) Travel & Lodging**

2025---The Union Club Hotel attached to the University Memorial Center was contracted as the meeting hotel. This is a small boutique hotel and did not provide a large block of rooms. We were able to fill the block. We also contracted with the university to use a residence hall. Although we contracted for 225 rooms we had to drop that to 150 and barely met that minimum. This is a similar trend to what we saw at the previous two meetings. Although there is an assumption that attendees prefer the campus option partly for cheaper rooms via the dorms, the data does not support this as we have seen a number of attendees using non-contracted hotels and AirBnB type arrangements. Partly this is due to the cost of dorms not being much lower than sharing a hotel room, and partly I believe this has to do with changing expectations of meeting attendees.

2026 and 2027---For the next two meetings we are contracted with the meeting hotels. In Norfolk we are contracted at a rate of \$178 per room for 1,005 room nights (about 250/night during the conference). Under the Grand Rapids contract we are responsible for 990 room nights at \$199 per room.

## **(5) Abstract Submissions**

2025---Steve Sheffield (chair), Lois Alexander, Maddie Arszulowicz, Brad Blood, Ginny Turner, Lisa Walsh, and managed the abstract submission and revision process. Abstract submissions were completed through the Oxford Abstracts portal. Presenters were asked

to use the form to submit their abstracts following the guidelines of the *Journal of Mammalogy*. Abstracts were lightly reviewed but as long as the science was in our field they were accepted and submitters were responsible for ensuring any suggested revisions were made. A total of 280 abstracts were submitted which broke down to 186 oral (107 student and 79 non-student) and 94 posters (77 student and 17 non-student). We once again did not print the program book or the abstracts. Abstracts are available on the Oxford Abstracts site as is a virtual program. A pdf program was created and is available via the meeting website.

Oxford Abstracts is a passable system, but there are some significant drawbacks. After last year's meeting we met with their support team to outline our roadblocks, and we chose to work with them again hoping some of these would be addressed. In the end, none of them were addressed so we will be looking for additional options over the next year.

### **(6) Program**

2025---The scientific program included 12 workshops, 3 symposia, 2 plenary sessions, 4 field trips, and a capstone session.

In the past Symposia and Workshop proposals were due almost 18 months before the meeting; they would be offered in order to allow time for review to account for them in the budget. The last two years we have used placeholder spots in the budget, which has allowed us the flexibility to recruit symposia and workshops less than 9 months out from the meeting. This flexibility allowed for a fuller offering at this year's meeting and we intend to continue this practice.

### **(7) 2026, 2027, and 2028 Meeting Venues**

2026---The 105rd Annual Meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists will be held at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott. The meeting dates are confirmed for 12 to 15 June 2026.

2027---The 106th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists will be held 25 to 28 June 2027 at Amway Grand Plaza in Grand Rapids, MI.

2028---The 107th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists is tentatively scheduled to be held at the University of Hawaii-Hilo as a joint meeting with the Australian Mammal Society and in conjunction with the Mammal Society of Japan and the Australasian Wildlife Management Society. The dates for this meeting have not been set. Kerrell and I will be doing a site visit at the beginning of August 2025. We reached out to the Society for Marine Mammalogy, but they declined to participate. I plan to reach out again now that we have more information.

### **Action Items:**

(1) **Budget Request:** The Program Committee requests approval of a budget line item to support administrative and board required expenses at the 2026 meeting. These items include, travel support for invited speakers, expenses associated with board meetings, planning expenses for future meetings, Program Director honorarium, meeting planner expenses, and a contingency fund. We recognize the importance of having affordable meetings and we appreciate the support of the board in offsetting these costs. The amount requested is an increase of 12.5% over last year, however, the request from the board did not increase significantly last year from the year before and is much lower than the requests for 2022 and 2019 (2025 - \$79,450.74, 2024 - \$79,492.90, 2022 - \$125,182.87, 2019 - \$135,545.00, we did not include the IMC).

**REQUEST: \$90,000**

(2) **Plenary Speakers:** The plenary sessions at the annual meeting featured talks from winners of awards and honaria. Over the last decade the number of named awards has increased, however the list of awards that are provided with a slot in the plenary has not changed very much. Programme committee would ask the board to consider the current makeup of plenary speakers and to make a determination if additional awards should be provided with a featured speaking slot. The things that would need to be taken to consideration are first, last year we made the decision to reduce our meeting to one day, two unopposed plenary and the member meeting already take up a day and a half of the schedule, adding more talks to an unopposed plenary would shrink available time further, unless additional evening “plenaries” were established. Second, the program committee provides a stipend to seven featured speakers and an additional senior award member to allow them to attend the meeting, increasing the number of featured speakers would additionally require an increase in travel funding. Third, not all award winners are not able to participate in every given meeting and so having set slots for each award could create complications in building the schedule. Fourth, not all awards are created equal and may not require a longer time slot, but we would request board input on those decisions.

(3) **Renaming Auction:** The Program committee in discussion switched the resolution committee this year to name the auction in honor of Mac McIntyre. We fully support the proposal put forth by the resolution committee to rename the auction in his honor as the person who founded it.

TOTAL REQUEST: \$90,000

**Respectfully submitted,**

John Hanson, Program Director & Committee Chair

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