

International Relations Committee

Committee Members: M. Abi-Said, T. Álvarez-Castañeda, R. Borroto-Paez, B. Buttler, G. N. Cameron, J. P. Carrera E., O. M. Coker, N. de la Sancha, D. A. Flores, S. L. Gardner, J. R. Goheen, J. F. González-Maya, E. E. Gutiérrez, D. A. Kelt, G. J. Kenagy, F. A. A. Khan, A. V. Linzey, S. Musila, R. A. Ojeda, N. Ordóñez-Garza, I. Ortega, S. Pavan, N. Pradhan, A. Previtali (Co-Chair), K. C. Rowe, J. Salazar-Bravo, , D. A. Schlitter (Co-Chair), A. T. Smith, S. A. Solari, T. Tarifa, M. V. Vieira.

Mission:

The Board of Directors established the International Relations Committee in 1960 to maintain and enhance communication between members of the Society and mammalogists outside North America. The mission of this Committee is to advance the field of mammalogy by encouraging and facilitating international collaboration among members of the ASM and mammalogists from other countries.

Information Items:

A- Ongoing initiatives:

(1) Sponsored Membership Program: The International Relations Committee continues to receive nominations and requests for processing sponsored memberships. Currently the program is focusing on students from Latin America and Africa, especially from sub-Saharan Africa. Most nominations are coming from IRC members and known personally by them. These nominated persons range in experience from outstanding doctoral students to senior mammalogists, although most are students or professionals early in their careers. This effort continues to generate a large pool of names of deserving people to be considered for sponsored online memberships. Many of these candidates have been successfully processed and are being sponsored. Regular ASM members are strongly encouraged to nominate suitable potential young individuals for sponsored memberships. Because most sponsored members are students or early in their careers, the cost of ASM membership is a hardship for them. Either they do not have credit cards with which to pay their dues or they live in countries that prohibit foreign currency exchange or make it expensive to send foreign currency. The Sponsored Membership Fund which covers annual dues for many sponsored memberships is critical to the success of this sponsored membership program. ASM members are encouraged to donate regularly to the Sponsored Membership Fund, easily found on the ASM website (<http://www.mammalogy.org/>).

In addition to the IRC efforts at finding worthy individuals for sponsored memberships, many ASM members also sponsor individuals independently of this program. Clearly any such multiple-year sponsorship commitments from donating members are always helpful, and additional sponsorships by members outside of the IRC program are always welcome. Finally, the IRC would like to thank those individuals who donated to the ASM's Sponsored Membership Fund that helps cover the dues of sponsored members, those regular ASM members who have committed to directly cover the dues of selected individuals for sponsorship, and those individuals who submit the names of outstanding students to be considered for this program.

(2) Links to Mammal Societies of the World: Committee members continue to serve as contacts with mammal societies throughout the world, providing information on mammal meetings to appear on the ASM website and in the *Journal of Mammalogy* and other international publications. Major updating of the web pages on the ASM website continues to be done concerning changes in the officers and both names and addresses of international mammal societies and announcements of their annual meetings and symposia. This is an ongoing task and we are looking for volunteers to assist in this interesting and important task, namely to help collect and maintain an up-to-date list of links to the mammal societies of the world. Contact the IRC co-chairs if interested.

For more interactions with international activities, among others, in mammalogy, members are also invited to join Facebook's American Society of Mammalogists' site at:

https://www.facebook.com/American.Society.of.Mammalogists/?hc_ref=ARS7MI-9G2bFyEZxI08U3TMdK5DsRT8hcheVJdU8cZIA_zD1nJA2AOm5UNuNi5SSvx0&fref=nf
<http://www.facebook.com/American.Society.of.Mammalogists?fref=ts>

(3) International Meetings and the International Federation of Mammalogists (IFM): The ASM in collaboration with the University of Alaska extended a successful invitation to host the next IMC at Anchorage, Alaska, in 2021. Details of the next IMC-13 will be forthcoming as they develop. The International Relations Committee conducted a travel award program for ASM students to assist them in attending the last two IMCs, namely IMC-11 in Belfast and IMC-12 in Perth. It is the intent of the IRC to again develop a similar program for international ASM students to assist them in attending the joint ASM/IMC-13 meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, in 2021. Because of the funding delays in ASM budgeting and the need for developing a timely process for advertising the program widely, allowing applicants time to apply, and giving the *ad hoc* IRC review committee time to judge the applications, it is the intent of the IRC to request \$6000 from the next ASM budgetary cycle for 2020 to cover four travel awards to be given to International ASM students to present at the next IMC-13.

The IFM maintains a presence on Facebook which can be accessed at International Federation of Mammalogists https://www.facebook.com/groups/197157050399156/?ref=br_rs. Members are invited to join this site for more information on the Federation's activities and are reminded to read the annual report from the IFM as well.

(4) ASM Student Award for Latin American Mammal Societies: Because of its international reputation, international students place a high value on being associated with the ASM. The IRC has been expanding the student award program beyond the student award program with SAREM (Argentina) and AEM (Ecuador) student awards to include a similar student award program for the rest of the current national mammal societies in Latin America. IRC members Noé de la Sancha and James Kenagy with the assistance of Co-chair Andrea Previtali have contacted the remaining societies and gotten commitments from the societies in Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru. Noé is still working with the societies in Brazil, Panama, Venezuela, and El Salvador. The Student Award goes to a student member from the Society selected from the presentations at their scientific meeting and is an online membership to the ASM, including all member rights and subscriptions to ASM's signature publications: *Journal of*

Mammalogy and *Mammalian Species*. The ASM was able to endow this award program in 2011 through a generous contribution from Jim and Carol Patton and the endowment has grown sufficiently so that henceforth an online student membership award can be given to each outstanding student selected at their scientific meeting from the various national societies for three years. The funding of the membership awards no longer comes from the general fund budget.

The Latin American national mammal societies involved are as follows: **Argentina:** Sociedad Argentina para el Estudio de los Mamíferos (SAREM); **Bolivia:** Red Boliviana de Mastozoología (RBM); **Brazil:** Sociedade Brasileira de Mastozoología (SMBz); **Colombia:** Sociedad Colombiana de Mastozoología; **Ecuador:** Asociación Ecuatoriana de Mastozoología (AEM); **El Salvador:** Grupo de Trabajo de Mastozoología de El Salvador (GTMES); **Guatemala:** Asociación Guatemalteca de Mastozoólogos (ASOGUAMA); **Mexico:** Asociación Mexicana de Mastozoología (AMMAC); **Panama:** Sociedad Mastozoológica de Panama (SOMASPA); **Paraguay:** Asociación Paraguaya de Mastozoología; **Peru:** Sociedad Peruana de Mastozoología (SPM); and **Venezuela:** Asociación Venezolana para el Estudio de los Mamíferos (AsoVEM). These additional student awards are patterned after the original ASM/SAREM student award which is given each year to the outstanding student presentation at the annual SAREM meeting, namely a three-year on-line sponsored student membership in the ASM. Argentina and Ecuador have accepted this option for a student award, although Ecuador only has a biannual scientific meeting.

Initially the various societies were contacted, explaining the nature of the award and their roles in establishing the mechanisms for determining each society's awardee and encouraging each to use the SAREM model as a starting point for internal discussions. Each has agreed to pursue this option with their society, either at an annual meeting or through contact with relevant officers and members. Decisions from the other national societies are being awaited and current contacts for each society established.

The 2018 student awardee selected so far by the Red Boliviana de Mastozoología (RBM) is Lorena Zurita; by the Sociedad Colombiana de Mastozoología is Miguel Eduardo Rodríguez Posada; by the Asociación Paraguaya de Mastozoología is Bárbara Montserrat Camacho Giménez; and by the Sociedad Argentina para el estudio de los mamíferos is Diego Peralta. More students may be selected by the remaining societies.

(5) Caribbean Islands Society of Mammalogists (CISM): There has been a renewed effort to establish a mammal society among mammalogists who specialize on Caribbean mammals by Rafael Borroto-Paez (borroto@yahoo.com) assisted by Nathan Upham (nathan.upham@yale.edu) and J. Angel Soto-Centeno (angelo.soto@rutgers.edu). They are currently looking into the two mammalogical groups that include individuals from the islands, namely the Red Latinoamericana de Mastozoología (RELAM) versus the Red Latinoamericana para la Conservación de Murciélagos (RELCOM). They are also interested in assistance from any ASM member who might be interested in Caribbean mammals. Contact them if you are interested. Various options are being considered including developing a website focusing on Caribbean mammalogy, developing a symposium to include a session on the process of initiating this society, establishment of an ASM subgrouping of Caribbean specialists to focus attention on

the potential for a new society and emphasizing research in the region, encouraging Caribbean specialists to become more involved in the ASM through sponsored ASM online memberships for those with economic hardships precluding their joining the ASM in an effort to expand substantially regional membership coverage, and assisting at least one Caribbean specialist to attend an annual ASM meeting in future.

(6) Development of an African Mammal Society: Currently efforts to initiate an African society of mammalogists are still being pursued by a group of west African mammalogists led by Dr. Blaise Kadjo of l'Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The development of a database of individuals who would be interested in such a society continues. Solicitations so far have been sent to individuals from sub-Saharan Africa but will in time include others from outside of Africa who might be interested in joining. Names, addresses, contact information, and areas of specialty have been received from many persons. Discussions are underway to determine what kind of "society" might best serve the region and whether the initiative should be continental rather than regional, especially after the numerous positive responses received so far. By-Laws patterned after those of the ASM are being developed in a bilingual format in English and French. Discussions of the initiation of this society are planned at the next African Small Mammal Symposium to be held in Ethiopia in September, 2019.

(7) International Colleagues Seeking Information and Advice: International colleagues continue to contact the IRC seeking information and advice. Most queries deal with sources of information on ASM activities (including travel award funding options and membership possibilities), mammals, literature, and educational opportunities. The latter includes advice on which academic institutions might be suitable for graduate training in a specific field of study, not always on mammals, and contact information on potential ASM members who are located at those institutions. This is a new area of service for the IRC and continues to grow in need.

B- New Initiatives:

(1) Symposium on Recent Advances in the Conservation of African Mammals: Along with the sponsoring African Graduate Student Research Fund Committee, the International Relations Committee together with the ASM's Conservation and Human Diversity committees are co-sponsoring the effort to organize a symposium entitled, "Recent advances in the conservation of African mammals" at the 2021 joint American Society of Mammalogists–International Mammalogical Congress in Anchorage, Alaska. This symposium would represent the first effort to increase exposure of meeting attendees to historically-underrepresented geographic regions, and attendance by mammalogists from said regions. With the Board's support, it is our intent that this symposium would represent the first in a longer-term commitment by the ASM to promote global diversity of mammalogists and mammalogy. A request is being considered for the next ASM budgetary cycle for the ASM Board to consider matching funds for up to \$10,000 which the co-sponsoring committees intend to raise from sources outside of the ASM.

(2) African Small Mammal Symposium: The next African Small Mammal Symposium will be held from September 16–21, 2019, at Mekelle University, Mekelle, Tigray, Ethiopia, and hosted by Dr. Meheretu Yonas (link to the website: <https://asms2019.ivb.cz/> for more developing details). The IRC assisted in trying to find financial support for more Africans to attend this

symposium. The World Wildlife Fund has a travel fund available for citizens from the following countries to attend such conferences: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of Congo, Uganda, or Zambia. If you or someone you know is from any of these 11 countries and might wish to attend this symposium or any other similar one, encourage them to check the following website and apply for these travel grants: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/projects/professional-development-grants>.

(3) The Committee welcomes new initiatives from any members. The co-chairs would like to thank all Committee members for their support and commitment, especially to those who have submitted names of individuals to be considered for sponsored memberships, helped in the continuing efforts to develop the student awards for Latin American mammal societies, and contributed to the initiative to establish a Caribbean mammal society and an African mammal society. Thanks to all!

Action Items: None.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Previtali, Co-Chair & Duane A. Schlitter, Co-Chair
(andrea.previtali@gmail.com) (happygd@suddenlink.net)