

International Relations Committee

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Mission:

The Board of Directors (BOD) 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.

A- Ongoing initiatives:

(1) Sponsored Membership Program: The IRC continues to receive nominations and requests for processing sponsored memberships. These nominated persons range in experience from outstanding doctoral students to senior mammalogists. Although most of them are students or early in their careers, and the cost of ASM membership is a hardship for them, especially during the economic hardships brought on by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Either they do not have credit cards with which to pay their dues, are facing severe economic hardships or live in countries that prohibit foreign currency exchange or make it too expensive to send foreign currency. The Sponsored Membership Fund which covers annual dues for many sponsored memberships is critical to the success of this program. ASM members are encouraged to donate regularly to the fund. Many ASM members also sponsor individuals independently of this program. Clearly any such multiple-year sponsorship commitments from donating members are always helpful.

The BOD is currently reviewing this program with the intent to consider making it more self-sustaining by setting up an endowment to cover the annual dues of sponsored members.

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 ASM web pages continues as changes occur in the officers of international mammal societies and announcements of their meetings. This is an ongoing task and is now made more difficult with numerous cancelations occurring. We are looking for volunteers to assist in this task. Contact the IRC co-chairs if interested.

(3) International Meetings and the International Federation of Mammalogists (IFM): The ASM in collaboration with the University of Alaska is hosting the next IMC at Anchorage, Alaska. Because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, IMC-13 was postponed until 14-20 July 2023. The IRC conducted a travel award program for ASM student members to assist them in attending the last two IMCs. It is the intent of the IRC to develop a similar program to assist international ASM members in attending the joint ASM/IMC-13 meeting. Since this meeting will also be a normal annual ASM meeting, the proposed travel award program (by the IRC) will not be open to students from the USA or Canada, but rather to international undergraduate and graduate students, as well as any person whose terminal degree was awarded within the previous five years. Because of the funding delays in ASM budgeting and the time necessary for advertising the program widely, for applicants to apply, and for the *ad hoc* IRC review committee to judge the applications, it is the intent of the IRC to request \$6,000 from the 2022 ASM budgetary cycle to cover four travel awards for International ASM members to present at the IMC-13.

(4) Carol and Jim Patton Award for Outstanding Latin American Graduate Students of Mammalogy: The name for this award was proposed during the IRC committee meeting at the 99th Annual Meeting of the ASM and was approved by the ASM BOD. This decision was made in recognition of the generous contribution that Carol and Jim Patton made to endow the annual costs of this program. The new name also intends to recognize the efforts made by this couple towards promoting the growth of mammalogy in Latin America.

Several IRC members have contributed to the growth of this award. Thanks to that, we now see more Latin American mammalogy societies participating, we have a certificate and a description for the award in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and a place for the award with the recipients name on the ASM website.

The Carol and Jim Patton Award is awarded to one outstanding student from each of the affiliated mammal societies in Latin America. Each year, the participating Societies provide the name of a student selected based on criteria established by each society. The award consists of three consecutive years of ASM sponsored membership.

In 2019, we presented this award in person to the students as members of the IRC attended the various mammal-society meetings through Latin America. In 2020 we sent the students the certificate by email.

To increase the visibility of the trajectories in mammalogy of the awardees, last year we created a flyer for each of them that was posted on the [IRC webpage](#) and on social networks.

The awardees for the 2020 Carol and Jim Patton Award are as follows:

- [Andrea Weiler Gustafson](#) - Asociación Paraguaya de Mastozoología (APM)
- [Gabriela Cedeño Pernet](#) - Sociedad Mastozoológica de Panamá (SMP)
- [Edson Fiedler Abreu Jr.](#) - Sociedade Brasileira de Mastozoologia (SBMz)
- [Fabiola Corona](#) - Asociación Guatemalteca de Mastozoólogos (ASOGUAMA)
- [Celina Carrizo](#) - Sociedad Argentina para el Estudio de los Mamíferos (SAREM)
- [Paula Iturralde-Pólit](#) - Asociación Ecuatoriana de Mastozoología (AEM)

We invite IRC members, especially those from Latin American countries, to assist with this program by contacting the various mammal societies to remind them to send their nominations each year, gathering the necessary information to create the certificate and flyer for the awardee, coordinating the presentation of the award certificate at a meeting (when possible), and providing information and advice to the student regarding activities and benefits of associating with the ASM. Contact the IRC co-chairs if interested in assisting in these enjoyable and worthy tasks.

(5) Caribbean Islands Society of Mammalogists (CISM): During the Pandemic, there has been little progress on the establishment of this new society. IRC member Rafael Borroto-Paez (borroto@yahoo.com) assisted by Nathan Upham (nathan.upham@yale.edu) and J. Angel Soto-Centeno (angelo.soto@rutgers.edu) are heading up this effort. They have been looking into the two mammalogical groups that include individuals from the islands, namely the Red Latino americana de Mastozoología (RELAM) and the Red Latino americana para la Conservación de Murciélagos (RELCOM). They are also looking for assistance from any ASM members who are interested in this initiative. Contact them if interested.

(6) Development of an African Mammal Society: As with the Caribbean Mammal Society, this effort has also not received much attention with relatively low activity occurring during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa. Dr. Blaise Kadjo of l'Université Félix Houphouet-Boigny, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, continues to lead this effort. It appears that the best way to initiate this Society is with a continental-wide initiation meeting of as many of those persons interested as possible at some venue in Africa. Funding for such a gathering is being explored.

(7) International Colleagues Seeking Information and Advice: Most queries deal with sources of information on ASM activities (including travel awards 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.

(8) Symposium on Recent Advances in the Conservation of African Mammals: A jointly co-sponsored symposium entitled "Recent Advances in the Conservation of African Mammals" was scheduled for the ASM/IMC meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, in 2021. Since the meeting has been postponed until July, 2023, it is anticipated that this symposium will still be held in 2023. Currently about \$24,000 has been raised from the World Wildlife Fund and private donors to fully defray expenses associated with four invited speakers who have all confirmed they will be available in 2023. For more details of this symposium, see the annual report of the African Graduate Student Research Fund Committee.

(9) African Small Mammal Symposium: The next African Small Mammal Symposium will be held in Namibia in 2023. The IRC will continue to assist in trying to find financial support for more Africans to attend this symposium. The World Wildlife Fund has had 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, and 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>.

(10) Disposition of Surplus Journals and Other Mammal Reference Materials: Various institutions and ASM members continue to request that the IRC help in an effort to disperse journals and other mammalian reference materials to institutions in developing countries rather than dispose of them or recycle the paper. Initially, countries in Africa and Latin America have been targeted by the donors as potentially worthy. Efforts in this initiative include the following: Finding interested institutions in the various countries; finding funds to pay the shipping to developing countries; and finding shipping companies which ship such freight internationally. Lists of potential institutions in Africa and Latin America have been developed. A program at the US AID that ships library resource materials to developing countries was investigated but was not appropriate. The best alternative found for shipping library materials internationally seems to be the US Postal Service “M bags” option. With an aging ASM membership who still have hard copy reference libraries but may wish at some point to downsize in retirement and institutional libraries facing space and budgetary problems while converting to electronic copies of publications, this program has the potential to grow.

(11) Sponsorship of Latin American Mammal Congress: The next Latin American Mammal Congress will be hosted by the Peruvian Mammal Society and held virtually in October 2021. In addition to numerous attendees from Latin American countries, this congress will be attended by numerous Neotropical mammalogists from Europe and North America. The ASM’s BOD approved the sponsorship of this Congress with a grant of \$3,000. These funds have already been received by the host of the Congress and represent a significant contribution to cover the expenses associated with organizing this international meeting. For more information, visit the meeting website: <https://www.mastozoologiaperu.org/v-congreso-2021.html>

B-New Initiatives:

(1) Other Potential Student Award: Additional student awards are being considered, including one for the Triennial Latin American Mammal Congress and for other mammal societies in Africa and Australia. Details of how this might be accomplished are being discussed by the Committee. With thoughtful development and appropriate presentation, it might be possible to expand the student awards consisting of online ASM memberships to some additional societies in developing countries or regions.

The Committee welcomes new initiatives from any members. The co-chairs would like to thank all Committee members for their support and commitment. Thanks to all!

C-Action Items:

- (1) We request \$800 to cover costs associated with two programs in Latin America:
 - a. \$480 to cover the costs associated with up to 24 Carol and Jim Patton Awards to students of Latin American mammal societies; as this award includes three years of online-only membership in the ASM, this will cover the cost of membership for 6

awardees from 2020, 8 projected awardees for 2021, and 10 projected awardees for 2022.

- b. \$320 to cover the first year of a projected 3-yr online-only membership in the ASM, and a \$300 cash award, for a single student awardee from the 2021 Latin American Mammal Congress awardee (Peru, October 2021)

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Previtali and Duane A. Schlitter, Co-Chairs

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