

Conservation Committee

Committee Members: R.W. Kays (Chair), M.S. Barbour, J. Boyles, B. Bergstrom, B. Blood, T. J. Doonan, T.M. Gehring, J. Goheen, K. Helgen, A. Joachim, M. Kreuzer, A. Krevitz, C. Long, S.A. MacDonald, A. Morzillo, S. Nilz, J. F. Nugent, A.F. O'Connell, D.R. Rabon, L. Randa, R. Rose, M. Schadler, W. Sechrest, S. Sheffield, Q. Shurtliff, B. Swanson, B. Thiagarajan, V. Turner, S. Vignieri, J. Young

Mission:

The Conservation Committee was established by the ASM in 1927. First known as the Conservation of Land Mammals Committee, the name was changed to the Conservation Committee in 2002 to reflect the fact that it dealt with conservation issues that included all mammals. Currently, the committee is subdivided into seven subcommittees: Position Letters, Conservation Education, Coordination with other Organizations, Monitoring State and Federal Legislation in the USA and Canada, Monitoring International Issues, Special Projects, and Resolutions. In 2002-2003, the Aldo Leopold Conservation Award subcommittee was moved to full standing committee status.

Information Items:

(1) Justin Boyles, Andy Joachim, Thomas Gehring, and Michael Kreuzer rotated off the committee this year, many thanks for their years of service. We have added five new committee members: Ivan Castro-Arellano, Jake Goheen, Mundy Hackett, Jeff Moore, Patty Ruback.

(2) *New Letters* - We worked with Terry Bowyer and the resolutions committee on a letter expressing concern with Alaska's predator control policies.

(3) *Conservation Issues Follow up* - We observed positive developments on two issues that we acted on last year, showing that our letters may be having an effect:

(A) *Wolf Delisting* - Two separate federal court rulings have supported the views expressed by the ASM. The USFWS has recently produced a new proposal that meets at least some of our critiques and we are evaluating it in detail.

(B) *Jumping Mouse Delisting* - The USFWS followed the advice of the ASM (and other voices) in calling for a new study on the taxonomy of the federally listed endangered subspecies *Zapus hudsonius preblei* to check the results of a recently published controversial paper that suggested the taxon was not valid. This year ASM committee members reviewed this new study and informally approved their rigorous methods and analyses. This second study supported the taxonomic status of *Z.h. preblei* and the USFWS is presently reviewing the study.

(4) Coordination with other Organizations:

(A) *Global Mammal Assessment* - We have initiated discussions with the IUCN's Global Mammal Assessment (GMA) team to explore how we might work together to improve the conservation of mammals worldwide. One area we have focused on is to raise the profile of Red Data List species classified as "Data Deficient". The GMA team is presently revising this list, after which we will explore how our committee might encourage mammalogists to study this poorly known, endangered group of mammals. A GMA workshop is being planned in conjunction with the 2006 ASM meetings.

(B) *Endangered Species Act Rewrite* – We have joined a group of scientific societies briefing the US Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in their effort to rewrite the Endangered Species Act. This direct contact with Senate staffers was organized by Tim Male (Environmental Defense) and had positive results in preventing (so far) a much watered down Bill favored by Senator Pombo from making it to the Senate floor. The problems of the drafted provisions included throwing out the law's critical habitat requirements in favor of largely voluntary recovery plans, and changing scientific requirements and pay landowners if their property is deemed necessary for habitat.

(C) *Southeast Regional Gap Analysis Project* - Members of the committee assisting this project by reviewing the known range, habitat affinities and predictive habitat models for a variety of mammalian taxa.

Action Items: None

Respectfully submitted,
Roland Kays, Chair
(rkays@mail.nysed.gov)