

## **International Relations Committee**

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

### **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- On-going initiatives:**

**(1) The Sponsored Membership Program:** This Committee has continued to receive nominations and requests and worked towards expanding the geographical distribution of sponsored memberships in developing countries. The IRC has tried various strategies to search for deserving students from developing countries. The heads of numerous national and regional mammal societies in developing countries, board members of the International Federation of Mammalogists, and colleagues at universities and museums in developing countries have been contacted for recommendations of suitable young promising individuals. Members of IRC have submitted names and contact information for outstanding students that they know personally. This effort continues to generate a large pool of names of deserving young mammalogists to be considered for sponsored online student memberships. Many of these candidates have been successfully processed and are being sponsored. The number of sponsored members is approaching 100 individuals from developing countries spanning the globe from Latin America to Asia. These individuals are sponsored by over 10 ASM members plus the donations in the Sponsored Membership Fund. The focus of efforts continues to look for potential sponsored members from Africa, Latin America and eastern and southwestern Asia. Members are strongly encouraged to nominate suitable potential young individuals for sponsored memberships.

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 Donation 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 who are worthy to be considered for this program.

**(2) The Buddy System and Proofreading of Foreign Language Summaries:** This initiative is now entirely under the Publications Advisory Board although members of IRC continue serve in various capacities in the mission of this initiative.

**(3) 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 officers and addresses of international mammal societies. This is an on-going 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 ASM site at:

<http://www.facebook.com/American.Society.of.Mammalogists?fref=ts>

**(4) International Meetings and the International Federation of Mammalogists (IFM):** An invitation from Australia to host the next International Mammal Congress (IMC) was accepted in 2013. IMC-12 is scheduled to be held in Perth, Australia, from 9-14 July 2017. In another attempt to assist ASM student members to attend the IMC-12, the ASM Board budgeted \$5,000 for student travel assistance to attend IMC-12 and charged the IRC to administer this travel award program. Various notices of application procedures and deadlines were posted to ASM members. By the application deadline, 71 completed applications received from ASM student members from Australia, Asia, Europe, North America, Central America, and South America. An *ad hoc* review committee of senior IRC members was formed and reviewed the applications. Four awardees were selected to receive \$1,250 each and two alternates were selected in case any of the awardees was unable to attend. The four awardees were announced by 15 December so they could use the awards to help leverage additional travel funds from other sources. The four awardees are as follows: **Laurel Yohe**, Stony Brook University, New York; **Alexis Mychijliw**, Stanford University, California; **Chris Law**, UC Santa Cruz, California; and **Elise Lauterbur**, Stony Brook University, New York. The two alternates selected were as follows: First alternate: **Renata Mylaert**, UNESP, Brazil; Second alternate: **Nora Weyer**, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

The IFM maintains a presence on Facebook, which can be accessed at

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/197157050399156/>. 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.

**(5) 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 seeks to expand the Student Award Program beyond the very successful ASM/SAREM student award to include a similar student award program for the rest of the current national mammal societies in Latin America. 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:** Asociación Boliviana de Investigadores de Mamíferos (ABIMA); **Brazil:** Sociedade Brasileira de Mastozoología (SMBz); **Colombia:** Sociedad Colombiana de Mastozoología; **Ecuador:** Asociación Ecuatoriana de Mastozoología (AEM); **Guatemala:** Asociación Guatemalteca de Mastozoólogos (ASOGUAMA); **Mexico:** Asociación Mexicana de Mastozoología (AMMAC); **Panama:** Sociedad Mastozoología 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 bi-annual 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. Subsequently each has agreed to pursue this option with their society, either at their next annual meeting or through contact with relevant officers and members. The Ecuadorian Society accepted and has already made an award at their annual meeting in June 2016. Decisions from the other national societies are being awaited and current contacts for each society established.

The 2016 awardee for SAREM is **Mariana Viglino**, Laboratorio de Paleontología, Centro Nacional Patagónico – CONICET, Puerto Madryn – Chubut, Argentina, and for AEM is **María Alejandra Camacho**, Museo de Zoología QCAZ, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador.

**(6) African Graduate Student Research Fund:** This fund has been fully developed and added to the list of other funds found on the Society website and in the membership solicitations. An *ad hoc* committee has been established for this fund. Details of the progress for the year can be found in their separate annual report. Chair of the *ad hoc* committee is Jacob Goheen. If interested in the efforts to establish this endowment fund or to work on its activities, contact Jacob R. Goheen ([jgoheen@uwyo.edu](mailto:jgoheen@uwyo.edu)). Starting an endowed research fund is a slow process that requires persistence and patience. Any help with its activities or contributions to this new research fund would be greatly appreciated.

**(7) Caribbean Islands Society of Mammalogists (CISM):** The process of establishing a mammal society devoted to the study of Caribbean mammals, originally proposed at the ASM meeting in Jacksonville, FL, continues. A list of people and institutions potentially interested in

the study of Caribbean mammals has been developed by IRC member Dr. R. Borroto-Paez. Establishing a website is being considered, depending in part in finding a person interested in and capable of maintaining such a website. To move this initiative along, promoting another symposium on Caribbean mammals either at a future ASM Annual Meeting or independently at a convenient geographic location might be the best option. Any ASM members interested in joining this initiative are encouraged to make contact with the IRC co-chairs.

**(8) 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 mammals, literature, or educational opportunities. The latter seek 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) ASM Sponsorship of the Latin American Mammal Congress:** The next Latin American Mammal Congress will be hosted by the Bolivian Mammal Society and held in La Paz, Bolivia, in December, 2018. The President and ASM member, Dr. Enzo Aliaga Rossel, and Latin American IRC members have asked if the ASM might be willing to help sponsor this Congress. This Congress, although a regional one, has an international attendance and is probably second in importance to the IMC conferences in the number of attendees and importance to mammalogists. Certainly interest in Neotropical Mammalogy is second in importance to an interest in North American Mammalogy to members of the ASM even though the ASM has an international membership. In addition to numerous attendees from various Latin American countries, it is attended by numerous Neotropical mammalogists from Europe and North America. The early budget for the Congress is estimated at \$40,000 to \$50,000 and seed money is critical for such international meetings. Any sponsorship funds from the ASM will be used to help fund a computerized registration system for the Congress and/or pay for the rental of the facilities for the Congress. See below for an action item request for \$3,000 to help sponsor the next Latin American Mammal Congress in La Paz, Bolivia.

The Committee welcomes new initiatives from any members. The Co-Chairs would like to thank the support and commitment of all Committee members, especially to those 13 senior IRC members who served on the *ad hoc* review committee for the IMC-12 travel awards. Thanks to all!

### **Action Items:**

**(1)** Move that the Board of Directors budget \$3,000 for an ASM sponsorship of the next Latin American Mammal Congress in La Paz, Bolivia, in 2018. See entry B (1) above under new initiatives for justification of this request.

### **Respectfully submitted,**

Ricardo Ojeda, Co-Chair & Duane A. Schlitter, Co-Chair

([rojeda@mendoza-conicet.gov.ar](mailto:rojeda@mendoza-conicet.gov.ar)) ([happygd@suddenlink.net](mailto:happygd@suddenlink.net))