

## **Marine Mammals Committee**

**Committee Members:** D. J. Boness (USA), R. L. Brownell, Jr. (USA), V. M. da Silva (Brazil), H. H. Edwards (USA), J. E. Heyning (USA), J. M. Lapsertis (USA), C. D. Marshall (USA), S. L. McDonald (USA), T. J. McIntyre (USA), D. K. Odell (USA, Incoming Chair), T. J. O'Shea (USA, Outgoing Chair), C. A. Potter (USA), R. J. Small (USA), M. J. Smolen (USA), M. A. Stevens (USA), and J. A. Thomas (USA)

### **Mission:**

The mission of the Marine Mammals Committee is to maintain and encourage interest in marine mammals in the ASM, to provide the membership with information about marine mammalogy, including conservation and legislative issues, to spearhead resolutions and legislation involving marine mammals, and to serve as a liaison between ASM and the Society for Marine Mammalogy (SMM). The Marine Mammals Committee was formed in 1921 and is the longest-standing active committee of ASM.

### **Information Items:**

(1) Committee membership changed slightly during 2004. We thank Paul K. Anderson, Lloyd F. Lowry, and Simona P. Roberts for their service on the Committee ending in 2004. Robert J. Small joined the Committee this year. Tom O'Shea notified ASM President Cameron of his intent to resign as Committee Chair effective 15 June 2005. Dan Odell agreed to serve as Committee Chair beginning this date, and his assumption of this duty was approved by President Cameron.

(2) In 2004 the Committee worked with ASM President Patterson on a letter to President Vicente Fox of Mexico commending actions by the government of Mexico to promote conservation of the vaquita, and recommending vigilance and additional action because of the species rarity and vulnerability. This letter precipitated a commentary from Prisciliano Melendrez Barrios, Comision Nacional De Acuacultura y Pesca, Direccion General De Ordenamiento Pesquero y Acuicola, Secretaria de Agricultura Ganaderia Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentacion in Mazatlan, Sinaloa. The Committee worked with outgoing President Patterson on a well-documented rebuttal to this commentary, sent by Patterson on 22 July 2004. This correspondence is available at the ASM web site under the Marine Mammal Committee section.

(3) Members of the Committee communicated with each other over the course of the year on a number of issues pertinent to the conservation of marine mammals. The Committee considered action on preparing a statement regarding U.S. Department of Defense exemptions to the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act, but postponed completion of this indefinitely until it becomes clear that such a statement would have an impact that was timely.

(4) The Committee section of the ASM web page was updated with links to the Society for Marine Mammalogy and other scientific societies pertinent to marine mammalogy,

links to information about careers in marine mammalogy, educational sites, sites with federal legislation pertaining to marine mammals, federal agency and non-governmental organization marine mammal web sites, and other useful information. This information appeared subsequent to completion of the 2004 Annual Report through the efforts of Dan Odell and of Kristin Kramer of the Informatics Committee.

(5) The Marine Mammals Committee solicited and confirmed tentative speakers for a proposed Symposium at the 2006 annual meeting of ASM in Massachusetts. The proposal was submitted to the Program Committee. The topic is “Large-scale marine ecosystem change and the conservation of marine mammals.” Proposed speakers include Peter Tyack (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute), Andrew Read (Duke University), Sue Moore (NOAA, National Marine Mammal Laboratory), and Scott Kraus (New England Aquarium).

**Action Items:** None.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
Thomas J. O’Shea, Chair  
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