

International Relations Committee

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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 has worked towards expanding the geographical distribution of sponsored memberships in developing countries. The Co-Chairs have been contacting 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 for recommendations of suitable individuals, especially young promising individuals. This effort continues to generate a large pool of names of deserving young mammalogists to be considered for sponsored memberships. Many of these candidates have been successfully processed and are being sponsored. The number of sponsored members includes over 30 individuals from 24 developing countries spanning the globe from Latin America to Asia. These individuals are sponsored by 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 and those regular ASM members who have committed to directly cover the dues of selected individuals for sponsorship.

(2) The Buddy System and Proofreading of Foreign Language Summaries: The Buddy System was set up to provide assistance to international authors who are not speakers of English as a first language. The authors are referred to the Buddy System by editors after they have submitted a manuscript for publication if the appropriate editor thinks that the English writing

needs improvement or enhancement with foreign language summaries. An *ad hoc* subcommittee for this program continues to work on finding better ways to advertise this service and to coordinate efforts. Barbara Blake, with the assistance of Alicia Linzey, promotes and coordinates this program with the Publications Committee.

The details of the buddy program and names of buddies, proofreaders, and translators are published annually in the April issue of the *Journal*. The list of buddy reviewers is constantly being updated. It is especially helpful if buddy reviewers will list their scientific area(s) of expertise when offering to serve as reviewers.

The *Journal of Mammalogy* also publishes foreign language summaries for many articles, including all those from Latin America. These summaries are proofread by ASM members. The names of proofreaders and translators are also printed in the April issue of the *Journal*. Please contact Barbara Blake of the Publications Committee directly (bhblake@uncg.edu) if you have such native language skills and are willing to help with this valuable service.

(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 was done this past year 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 10-14 July 2017 in Perth, Australia. In another attempt to assist ASM student members to attend the IMC-12, travel funds will be requested from the ASM Board. For IMC-11, the IRC managed a student travel assistance program and will offer to do it again if similar funds are allocated for IMC-12. In 2013, three ASM students were awarded travel grants of \$500 each (\$1000 from ASM and \$500 donated by ASM members), namely Molly McDonough, Texas Tech University; Silvia Pavan, American Museum of Natural History and City University of New York; and Jeremy Hsu, Stanford University. Unfortunately Silvia Pavan was unable to attend due to a conflict with the timing of her research grant for travel to do research in Brazil so Adam Ferguson, Texas Tech University, first alternate, was awarded the third travel grant. All three attended the Congress and are now doing post-doctoral fellowships. See action item below.

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.

(5) ASM SAREM Student Membership Award: In 2008, the SAREM (Argentine Mammal Society) and the ASM Board established an annual award for the best SAREM student member presentation at the SAREM Annual Meeting. The award goes to a SAREM student member from a developing country 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 IRC was able to endow this award in 2011 through a generous contribution from Jim and Carol Patton, so that henceforth the online membership award will be given to each outstanding SAREM student for three years, and the funding of the membership award will no longer come from the general fund budget. The 2015 awardee for best student paper at the annual SAREM meeting was Felipe Busker, Laboratorio de Paleontología, Centro Nacional Patagónico – CONICET, Puerto Madryn, Chubut, Argentina.

(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). 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.

B- New Initiatives:

(1) ASM Student Award for Additional 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 current national mammal societies in the following Latin American countries, in addition to the Argentine society: **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 new student awards would be patterned after the ASM/SAREM Student Award, which is given to the outstanding student presentation at the SAREM Annual Meeting, namely a three-year on-line sponsored student membership in the ASM. Preliminary contacts have been made with each of these additional national societies, explaining the nature of the award and their roles in establishing the mechanisms for determining each society's awardee, 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. Decisions are being awaited and contacts for each society established.

If each society agrees to establish such a student award, the initial SAREM endowment will be used to fund the sponsored on-line student memberships, a potential for 11 awardees for a three-year period or \$60/year for each of the 11 societies. If the initial endowment is insufficient to fund the required amounts each year, additional donations for the endowment will be sought. Anyone interested in supporting this effort or who might know of a potential source for such financial support is asked to contact the IRC or the Trustees. If the ASM Board approves this initiative, the IRC will continue establishing a student sponsored membership award with each society with the award being comparable to the ASM/SAREM Student Award. See action item below.

(2) 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 seems to be growing in need.

(3) On-line Library Resource Options through American Academic Libraries: A query was received at the 2015 Annual Meeting on whether ASM international members with limited library resources locally might access on-line library resources, especially journal articles, through American academic libraries and their on-line options. American academic libraries, like most in developed countries, use various databases that may be free to users or accessible through portals supplied by the institutions. The former are generally accessible freely by anyone anywhere in the world with internet access. The latter are basically not freely accessible. These portals are supplied by subscription services on a subscription fee basis. The subscription service assess annual fees on a yearly basis determined by the number of users (students, faculty and staff at the institution) or by the number of “hits” the previous year or both. Subscription costs for such services such as the popular JSTOR and other similar ones, for example, are increasingly expensive and usually are in the tens of thousands of dollars annually so access to these services is zealously guarded by the institutions. Contact with library administrators at Kansas State University, Texas A&M University, and University of Pittsburgh indicated that such an opportunity would be essentially not available at this time to any ASM international members due to potential increased subscription fees involved.

The Committee welcomes new initiatives from any members. The Co-Chairs would like to thank the support and commitment of all Committee members. Thanks to all!

Action Items:

(1) Move that the Board of Directors budget \$2000 for ASM student travel awards for the IMC-12 meeting in Perth, Australia, with such an amount to be administered by an ad-hoc committee of senior IRC members in a similar competitive program as that used to award similar travel assistance to ASM students traveling to IMC-11 in 2013.

(2) Move that the ASM Board of Directors approve a new sponsored student ASM membership award similar to the existing ASM/SAREM Student Award for the national mammal societies in

the following countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela, after each society develops their own program to determine the competition and mechanism for selecting the awardee.

Respectfully submitted,

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