

Legislation and Regulation Committee

Committee Members: R.T. Bowyer, V. Brack, Jr., R. W. Kays, T. J. McIntyre, D. Odell, T. J. O'Shea, E. A. Rickart, R. Rodriguez, S. R. Sheffield, D. W. Sparks (Chair), E. W. Valdez.

Mission:

The Legislation and Regulations Committee was formed in 1976 to monitor and provide input into the state and federal regulation and legislation process on such issues as endangered species, trapping and harvesting regulations, and the use of animals for experimental purposes. The Committee also interacts with the legislative monitoring groups of AIBS.

Information Items:

(1) U.S Legislation:

The Committee continues to monitor efforts in the US House of Representatives to revise multiple pieces of environmental legislation especially the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The House Natural Resources Committee hosted a series of meetings aimed “finding ways to improve ESA.” In 2015, congressional deadlock and likely presidential vetoes led the committee to label these efforts as political rabble rousing, and that remains true in 2016. ASM members should understand, however this could change rapidly in response to the upcoming presidential election and up/down ticket interactions. The congress and the president were able to agree on one bill of note to mammalogists: naming the Bison as the U.S. National Mammal.

(2) Kansas State Legislation:

The Committee also continues to monitor a series of legislative initiatives in Kansas aimed at repealing the state version of ESA and limiting the powers of conservation easements. These bills have faced strong opposition from the environmental community. However, it is likely that a future variant of these bills will eventually be passed.

(3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Regulations:

The USFWS has issued a series of regulations and proposed regulations of interest to the membership. First, USFWS released a new 4(d) rule associated with *Myotis septentrionalis*, which is now protected under ESA. This rule removes most of the ESA-associated protections from the species. In response to this event and issues related to WNS, multiple states have recently or are now taking steps to protect bats. Second, USFWS has released proposed rules associated with how the service will prioritize species that have been proposed for listing. Third, USFWS has released revised mitigation guidelines that are likely to result in large-scale mitigation efforts aimed at creating habitat for migratory birds and endangered wildlife. These efforts are already receiving backlash from industry as they can result in multi-million dollar costs to project proponents. Fourth, USFWS has released a draft Habitat Conservation Plan and the associated Environmental Impact Statement that permits wind energy development across an 8 state region (USFWS Region 5) spanning from Minnesota east to Ohio and south to Missouri.

Members are encouraged to carefully examine this document. Fifth, several mammalian species are under consideration for down-listing or delisting including both species of Manatee and populations of grizzly bear near Yellowstone.

Action Items:

(1) Member O'Shea has asked to retire from the Committee after many years of service.

Respectfully submitted,
Dale W. Sparks, Chair
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