

ASM International Relations Committee

2023 annual report

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Mission: The Board of Directors (BOD) established the International Relations Committee (IRC) in 1960 to maintain and enhance communication between members of the Society and mammalogists outside North America. The IRC's mission is to advance the field of mammalogy by encouraging and facilitating international collaboration among members of the ASM and mammalogists from other countries.

(A) Ongoing initiatives:

1) Sponsored Membership Program: The IRC continues to receive nominations and requests for processing sponsored memberships. The IRC is working to geographically expand and administratively streamline the process by which sponsored memberships are allocated. This is a major effort that we hope will be used to further engage mammalogists and mammal societies across the Global South.

This year we nominated 162 individuals for sponsored memberships from 35 countries in the Global South. Memberships will be sponsored for 1 year, at which point renewals will be considered.

2) Carol and Jim Patton Award for Outstanding Latin American Graduate Students of Mammalogy: These awards are named in recognition of the generous contribution that Carol and Jim Patton made to endowing the annual costs of this program and making it independent from the General Reserve Fund income. The Carol and Jim Patton Award goes to outstanding students from numerous mammal societies in Latin America. Each year, the participating Societies provide the name of a student selected based on criteria established by each society. The award consists of three consecutive years of ASM sponsored online membership.

The awardees for the 2022 Carol and Jim Patton Award are as follows:

- **Lorena Knopfmacher** - Asociación Paraguaya de Mastozoología (APM)
- **Alejandro Guerrero Pistilli** - Asociación Paraguaya de Mastozoología (APM)
- **Esteban Ferreras** - Sociedad Argentina para el Estudio de los Mamíferos (SAREM)
- **Bárbara Escobar** - Asociación Guatemalteca de Mastozoólogos (ASOGUAMA)
- **Lesly Rodriguez** - Asociación Guatemalteca de Mastozoólogos (ASOGUAMA)

3) Symposium on Recent Advances in the Conservation of African Mammals: A co-sponsored symposium entitled "Recent Advances in the Conservation of African Mammals" will be held at the joint ASM/International Mammalogical Congress (IMC) meeting in 2023. Support

has been raised to fully defray expenses associated with five invited speakers, all of whom will also participate in a special feature in the *Journal of Mammalogy*.

Symposium speakers include:

- Abdullahi Hussein Ali (Kenya), Director, Hirola Conservation Programme and Somali Giraffe Project.
- Dominique Gonçalves (Mozambique), Manager, Gorongosa Elephant Project.
- Thandiwe Mweetwa (Zambia), Senior Ecology, Zambian Carnivore Programme.
- Fidisoa Rasambainarivo (Madagascar), Co-Founder, Mahaliana Labs.
- Iroko Tanshi (Nigeria), Director of Research, Small Mammal Conservation (SMACON) Organisation.

4) ASM Global South travel awards for IMC-13: Through the generosity of many donors and the ASM, the ASM BOD has made available travel grants for mammalogists (both graduate students and professionals) to attend IMC-13 and give an oral presentation or poster.

We received 160 applications (79 graduate students, 81 professionals) for Global South travel awards from citizens of 35 countries. The application process was coordinated between the IRC and the African Research Fellowship committee. Each application was evaluated by two reviewers. In ranking applications, we attempted to balance merit (from the evaluations) and need (based on economic status of the home countries, from an online World Bank assessment).

Our ASM Global South travel awardees are:

David Wechuli Barasa, graduate student, Kenya
Caryne de Carvalho Braga, professional, Brazil
Lucas de Oliveira Carneiro, graduate student, Brazil
Mariana Silva Ferreira, profesional, Brazil
Genet Berhe Gebrezgiher, graduate student, Ethiopia
Shadia Ibrahim Kilwanila, graduate student, Tanzania
Johnstone Kithiki Kimanzi, professional, Kenya
Tshepiso Lesedi Majelantle, graduate student, Botswana
Ngawo Namukonde, professional, Zambia
Upendo Richard Ngoda, graduate student, Tanzania
Joyce Rodrigues do Prado, professional, Brazil
Ana Lazar Gomes e Souza, professional, Brazil

5) African symposium and Global South awardee meeting buddies: Along with the African Research Fellowship committee, we have linked each of international participants from #3 and #4 with a meeting buddy. Each buddy is a regular ASM meeting attendee, and will offer to assist the new international participant in multiple aspects from networking to assistance in preparing presentations.

(B) New Initiatives:

1) With Board support and in collaboration with the Human Diversity Committee and Informatics Committee, we hope to build an interactive database of mammalogists across the globe. This database will allow users to search for mammalogists based on a variety of characteristics, including geographic location, languages spoken, racial or cultural background, taxonomic focus, expertise/interests, etc. We hope that such a database would facilitate numerous kinds of interactions with the global mammalogy community, ranging from finding panel speakers from underrepresented backgrounds to identifying future research collaborators.

(C) Action Items:

1) **Disbursement of Funds for ASM Sponsored Memberships:** We request that the BOD approve disbursement of \$1000 to cover costs associated with covering the following:

- first, second, and third year of membership to awardees of the 5 Latin American Student Field Research awards and the 5 African Graduate Student Fund grants.
- first, second, and third year of membership of the awardees of the Carol and Jim Patton Awards for Outstanding Graduate Students of Mammalogy selected by mammalogist societies from the Global South.
- sponsored membership to individuals from developing countries that have expressed the need for assistance to cover the \$20 membership fee and the desire to continue to be part of the ASM. We propose to support an estimated 20 individuals who cannot find a sponsor.

2) **Travel awards for the Global South:** Given the success of this program last year, the IRC wants to sustain the program to facilitate the participation of international members in the ASM annual meetings. The awards are intended for international graduate students and professionals, who will not only benefit their careers in mammalogy but also contribute to the quality and diversification of the meeting. For that purpose, the IRC requests \$6,000 to partly defray four travel awards for international ASM members to present at the 103rd Annual Meeting of the ASM in Boulder, CO.

3) **International Mammalogy Database:** We request that the BOD consider support for building an interactive, searchable database of mammalogists across the globe. This database will allow users to search for mammalogists based on a variety of characteristics, including geographic location, languages spoken, racial or cultural background, taxonomic focus, expertise/interests, etc. Additional details of this proposed database will be shared at the IMC-13 meeting. This will be a joint effort between the IRC, the Human Diversity Committee, and the Informatics Committee.

4) **Web manager for ASM's online presence.** To bolster engagement and collaboration with mammalogists across North America, the IRC, the Human Diversity Committee, the Program Committee, and the Informatics Committee asks the Board to move towards multilingual (English, Spanish, and Portuguese) web communications for the Society. This will be a large, complex effort that cannot rely on volunteerism. For this item, and to support all elements of ASM's online presence, the IRC, the Human Diversity Committee, and the Informatics Committee make a motion that the Board makes it a priority to allocate funding to support a paid web manager.

Respectfully submitted,

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