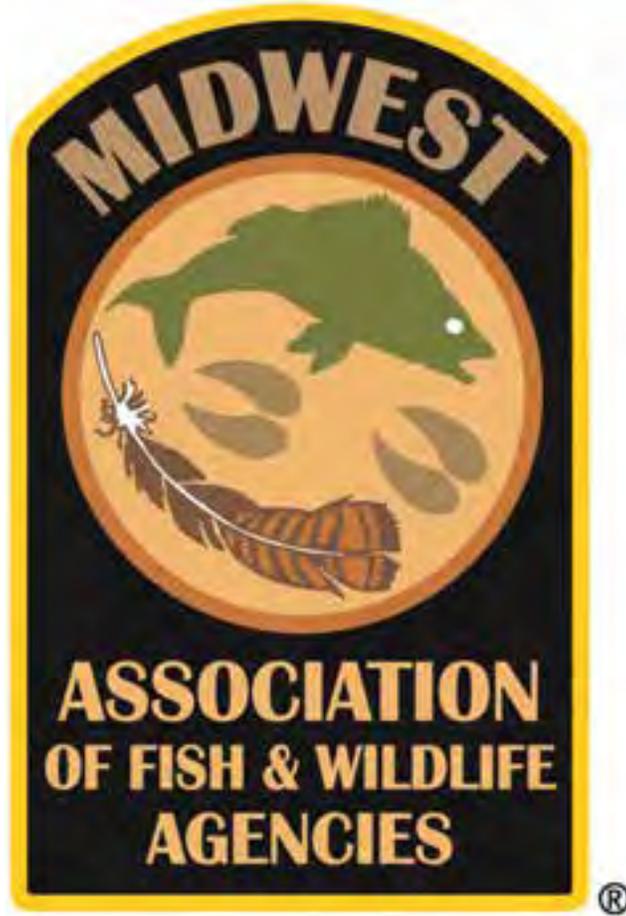


Section Three

Committee Reports



Committee Reports 2020

Committee Reports

CITES

Climate Change

Deer & Wild Turkey (*2019, meet August*)

Feral Swine

Furbearers

Hunter & Angler Recruitment & Retention (R3)

Law Enforcement

Legal (*none - disbanded*)

National Conservation Needs (NCN) (*none
change in multistate grants*)

Private Lands

Public Lands

Wildlife Action Plan

Wildlife & Fish Health

CITES

2020 MAFWA Committee Report on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

MEETINGS TIME & PLACE

(meetings that were attended by at least one CITES Technical Work Group Representative)

CITES 18th Conference of the Parties, August 2019; Geneva, Switzerland

109th AFWA Annual Meeting, September 2019; St. Paul, MN

Joint State/Federal CITES Meeting & AFWA International Relations Committee

CITES Technical Work Group/USFWS International Affairs, March 2020; Falls Church, VA

85th North American Wildlife & Natural Resource Conference, March 2020; Omaha NE

CITES Technical Work Group Meeting & AFWA International Relations Committee

CITES Interagency Coordination Committee, hosted quarterly by USFWS in Washington DC

CITES Technical Work Group also conducted business via numerous conference calls

CITES TECHNICAL WORK GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Carolyn Caldwell- MAFWA (MAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative)

Michael Bednarski-NEAFWA (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries)

Buddy Baker- SEAFWA (Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries)

Jim deVos- WAFWA (Arizona Game & Fish Department)

Deborah Hahn- Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Rick Jacobson- U.S. CITES Delegate Representing the State Fish & Wildlife Agencies and

International Relations Committee Co-Chair (Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection)

CITES OVERVIEW

The Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) is an international trade agreement among 182 countries (and the European Union) to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten species' survival. CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. These require that all imports, exports, re-exports, and introductions from the sea of species covered by CITES have to be authorized. The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is only permitted in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but for whom trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival. Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES countries for assistance in documenting trade.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Office of International Affairs, administers CITES for the United States. The USFWS solicits input and feedback on issues of importance from the state fish and wildlife agencies through the CITES Technical Work Group of the International Relations Committee of AFWA. The Technical Work Group consists of one representative from each of the four regional associations who work on behalf of states in concert with the USFWS on CITES matters. This state-federal partnership has been effectively working since 1994.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OVERVIEW

CITES updates presented in greater detail include: 1) CITES 18th Conference of the Parties; 2) China Prohibits the Consumption of Terrestrial Wildlife Taken From the Wild; 3) Case Study: U.S.

Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in International Trade; and 4) CITES Technical Work Group/USFWS International Affairs Meeting.

DIRECTOR ACTION ITEM

No action items at this time.

DIRECTOR INFORMATION ITEMS

CITES 18th Conference of the Parties

The signatories or Parties to CITES gather every three years to amend species lists and make policy decisions at the Conference of the Parties (CoP). The CITES Technical Work Group (Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA), Buddy Baker (SEAFWA), Jim deVos (WAFWA) and Deb Hahn (AFWA)) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies and where applicable the Provinces and Territories at the 18th CoP in Geneva, Switzerland from August 17-28, 2019. AFWA International Relations Committee Co-chair Rick Jacobson (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) served as the state representative on the U.S. Delegation. The CITES Secretariat, because of a change in meeting venue, constrained participant registrations which resulted in Mike Bednarski (NEAFWA) not being able to attend as the new NEAFWA representative.

A record 140 documents proposing new measures and policies on international trade were submitted to the CoP for consideration. Fifty-seven proposals to amend the species listed in Appendix I and II were also considered. Issues included but were not limited to eels, coral, paddlefish, turtles, and sea cucumber conservation; captive bred and ranched specimens; traceability of wildlife; rural communities and livelihoods; and the 2021-2030 CITES Strategic Vision. One thousand seven hundred Party delegates, observers, and journalists attended including 169 member governments and the European Union as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) representing groups from the Humane Society International to the Wildlife Conservation Society to the Safari Club International Foundation. In her opening remarks, the new CITES Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero stated, "It is our opportunity to advance the role of CITES in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity...As an environmental economist, I believe that creative ways need to be explored so that the costs of conservation and enforcement are recognized. Custodians of wildlife and local communities play a vital role in managing wildlife and deserve to be rewarded. The contribution of conservation and legal wildlife trade to sustainable development is evident. It provides for our food, our well-being, our jobs and economic development." Ms. Higuero is a Panama national who grew up in Missouri and received a Bachelors in Biology from the University of Missouri and a Masters in Natural Resource Economics and Policy from Duke University. The CITES Technical Work Group participated in working group meetings and attended numerous side events while continuing to develop relationships with CITES partners and promote sustainable use principles for the management and conservation of species around the globe. The CoP18 CITES Technical Work Group report is attached.

China Prohibits the Consumption of Any Terrestrial Wildlife Taken From the Wild

On March 5th the CITES Secretariat published a Notification from China regarding wildlife trade. The Notification clarified the February 24th Decision from the Chinese government to prohibit the consumption of any terrestrial wildlife taken from the wild. It excludes aquatic wildlife, wild plants, and farmed amphibians and reptiles. Non-consumptive use of wild terrestrial animals for scientific research, medicinal use, and display, continue to be regulated by existing laws.

The decision by the Chinese government was in response to reports suggesting the link between the sale of live wildlife held in tight quarters in a heavily utilized open market setting and COVID-

19 pandemic. Since then there has been a heightened interest in zoonotic disease and the role of wildlife trade in the pandemic. As result there has been a call for the complete ban of all import and export of live wildlife and the strengthening of the CITES treaty to prohibit international commercial wildlife trade to reduce the risk of future pandemics. Approximately 5,000 wild animal species are listed on CITES Appendix II, which allows for regulated international trade as long as it is legal and sustainable, and another 670 species listed on Appendix I, which prohibits all international trade for commercial purposes. CITES deals with threatened or potentially threatened species that are at risk from international trade and aims to ensure their conservation in the wild. CITES has no mandate to regulate or prohibit trade that may threaten the health of people, livestock, or other wildlife. The large majority of wildlife species internationally traded for human consumption are not covered by CITES. It is unlikely that amending the CITES treaty to include species that are not threatened by international trade would be adopted by the two thirds majority vote of the member countries.

Case Study: U.S. Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in International Trade

The CITES Technical Work Group is developing a case study document on "U.S. Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises in International Trade" which was started last summer by an AFWA intern working for Deb Hahn. Our goal is to provide current information on the international demand and trade in U.S. species of freshwater turtles and tortoises and to identify information gaps and future steps needed so that appropriate management and regulatory decisions are implemented at the state, regional, and national level to ensure wild turtle populations are sustainable. The document should be available later this summer.

CITES Technical Work Group/USFWS International Affairs Meeting

The CITES Technical Work Group meets at least twice annually with the USFWS International Affairs staff to discuss pertinent CITES issues and plan for upcoming meetings. We met in March at USFWS Headquarters for a full day session and discussed a broad range of topics. The USFWS staff was fully engaged in our meeting and continues to demonstrate a sincere desire to work cooperatively with the states. We participated in a brown bag lunch presentation open to all branches of the USFWS where we shared a presentation highlighting the role of the CITES Technical Work Group (Attachment 2).

TIME & PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next CITES meeting would have been the 31st Animals Committee scheduled for July 13-17th. However, on May 28th the CITES Secretariat announced the meeting was postponed until 2021. The 73rd Standing Committee is scheduled for October 5-10th in Geneva. Our CITES team will participate and engage in agenda items relevant to the states. It is likely that significant discussions will occur concerning live wildlife markets.

Respectfully submitted May 29, 2020, by

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CITES Technical Work Group Report



Report of the Eighteenth meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties 17-28 August 2019 Geneva, Switzerland

INTRODUCTION:

The CITES Technical Work Group (Team) (Buddy Baker (Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries), Carolyn Caldwell (MAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative), Jim deVos (Arizona Game and Fish Department) and Deb Hahn (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies and where applicable the Provinces and Territories at the 18th Conference of the Parties (CoP) in Geneva, Switzerland. AFWA International Relations Committee Co-chair Rick Jacobson (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) served as the state representative on the U.S. Delegation. The CITES Secretariat, because of a change in meeting venue, constrained participant registrations which resulted in Mike Bednarski (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries) not being able to attend as the new Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies representative.

SUMMARY:

A record 140 documents proposing new measures and policies on international trade were submitted to the CoP for consideration. Fifty-seven proposals to amend the species listed in Appendix I and II were also considered. Issues included but were not limited to eels, coral, paddlefish, turtle, and sea cucumber conservation; captive bred and ranched specimens; traceability of wildlife; rural communities and livelihoods; and the 2021-2030 CITES Strategic Vision. One thousand seven hundred Party delegates, observers, and journalists attended including 169 member governments and the European Union as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) representing groups from the Humane Society International to the Wildlife Conservation Society to the Safari Club International Foundation. In her opening remarks, the new CITES Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero stated, "It is our opportunity to advance the role of CITES in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity...As an environmental economist, I believe that creative ways need to be explored so that the costs of conservation and enforcement are recognized. Custodians of wildlife and local communities play a vital role in managing wildlife and deserve to be rewarded. The contribution of conservation and legal wildlife trade to sustainable development is evident. It provides for our food, our well-being, our jobs and economic development." Ms. Higuero is a Panama national who grew up in Missouri and received a Bachelors in Biology from the University of Missouri and a Masters in Natural Resource Economics and Policy from Duke University.

KEY OUTCOMES:

1. The 2021-2030 CITES Strategic Vision was approved with numerous references to supporting sustainable use and trade.
2. The document on traceability was approved with minor changes proposed by the U.S. to ensure that it was clear that the recommendations were voluntary, and that the definition was not an officially adopted CITES definition.
3. No decisions were agreed to that would impose new conservation or management requirements on the states, Provinces or Territories for American eel, coral, seahorses, turtles, or paddlefish conservation.
4. The Mexican population of *Crocodylus acutus* (American crocodile) was transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II. With the Teams urging, an intervention by the U.S. stated that Mexico has work to do in terms of a management plan which should include consultation with the range countries of which the U.S. is one.
5. Shortfin and longfin mako sharks were listed in Appendix II.
6. A proposal to list three species of teatfish (sea cucumber) in Appendix II was approved. Two of the species (*Holothuria (Microthele) whitmaei* (black teatfish) and *Holothuria (Microthele) fuscogilva* (white teatfish)) occur in U.S. waters. The listings should not impact their conservation and management by the states.
7. The proposal to list woolly mammoth in Appendix II was withdrawn .
8. The Team noted an increased number of overarching documents seeking actions related to non-CITES listing species such as those submitted for songbirds and amphibians. It remains to be seen whether this will continue and/or become a burden to CITES implementation at the domestic level.



CITES Technical Work Group Report



[Traceability of Wildlife in Trade](#) (CoP18 Doc. 42 (Rev.1)): Following efforts by an intersessional working group, the Standing Committee put forward a definition of Traceability. While our participation in the working group resulted in a proposed definition that was much less prescriptive than others, we felt that the proposed wording was still less than ideal. In support of the states, the U.S. Delegation proposed amendments to the draft decisions to ensure that the wording of the traceability definition and guidance is clearly non-binding and voluntary. The decisions were adopted with the U.S. amendments.

[CITES 2021-2030 Strategic Vision](#) (CoP18 Doc. 10): The Team participated on the Standing Committee Strategic Vision Working Group established in December 2017. The goal was to incorporate more sustainable-use friendly language into the 2021-2030 Strategic Vision at CoP18. The Team supported the document submitted to the CoP that supported sustainable use and trade. The Vision was further strengthened by edits made during the CoP and approved.

[Eels, Including the American Eel](#) (CoP18 Doc. 63): The document adopted included recommendations for non-CITES listed eels (e.g., American eel) that were voluntary and should be easy for the states to address over the next few years. The IUCN American eel assessment will likely occur in 2020. The Team will continue to engage with the European Union and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.



[Identification of Sturgeon and Paddlefish in Trade](#) (CoP18 Doc. 54.3): The document on sturgeon and paddlefish was approved and did not result in any new requirements. Moving forward the emphasis will be on looking at the challenges to implementing the universal labelling system for the trade in and identification of caviar of Resolution Conf. 12.7 (Rev. CoP17) considering the shift in source from wild to aquaculture.

[Precious Corals](#) (CoP18 Doc. 64): The document was approved without changes. The decisions request the Animals Committee to analyze the outcomes of the precious coral survey and the FAO study and prepare recommendations, as appropriate, on actions needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable harvest and use of all precious corals in international trade. The Team will work with the impacted states to review the report to make sure it is accurate and acceptable for the state agencies.



Photo by IISD/Kiara Worth

[Proposals to Amend the Appendices](#) (CoP18 Doc. 105): There were a record 57 proposals to increase or decrease controls on international trade of species in the CITES Appendices. While no proposals were highly controversial or concerning to the state, Provinces, and Territories, there appears to be a movement away from science-based decision making for listing species in the Appendices. Some have suggested the goal may be to list as many taxa as possible in Appendix I, irrespective of whether the listing criteria are satisfied, in the mistaken belief that an Appendix I listing and the attendant prohibition of trade will solve conservation problems.

[Conservation of Amphibians](#) (CoP18 Doc. 62 (Rev.1)): Costa Rica submitted a document on amphibian conservation. The document recommended general actions that included many non-CITES listed species. A working group was created to reduce the scope of the draft decisions. The updated draft decisions include identifying amphibians in trade, evaluating whether current levels are sustainable, gathering harvest information, and examining current enforcement efforts in an effort to advance recommendations to the next CoP.

[Songbird Trade and Conservation Management](#) (CoP18 Doc. 79): The U.S. and Sri Lanka submitted a document on the songbird trade that recommended the examination of the conservation implications of the songbird trade. A working group was created to clarify the draft decisions. The updated draft decisions recommend an analysis of the scale and scope of the songbird trade and a development of a workshop to provide information to the next Animals Committee for potential action.



CITES Technical Work Group Report



Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles (CoP18 Doc. 88): The document submitted to the CoP contained edits to a resolution on tortoise and freshwater turtle conservation which the Team supported. The document was approved. Future discussions will focus on the development of a guide on categories of turtle parts and derivatives in trade and arranging an enforcement meeting.

Guidance for Making Legal Acquisition Findings (CoP18 Doc. 39): The Parties have spent considerable time developing guidance to Parties on how to make a legal acquisition finding. A draft resolution that is non-binding guidance was developed and submitted to the CoP. With a few edits that improve the draft resolution, it was approved. The Team will monitor its implementation and potential implications for chain of custody and traceability of CITES-listed species and therefore their management.

Rural Communities/Livelihoods (CoP18 Docs. 17.1 and 18.1 (Rev.1)): CITES Parties continue to struggle to find a path forward to engage rural, indigenous, and local communities in CITES. An in-meeting working group was formed to consider developing a working group that would recommend a strategy on engaging rural, indigenous, and local communities to the next CoP.



American Crocodile Proposal (CoP18 Prop. 22): Mexico submitted a proposal to transfer the Mexican population of American crocodile from Appendix I to Appendix II. The Mexican down listing proposal for *C. acutus* passed without opposition. As promised, Mexico added an amendment from the floor for a zero quota for wild specimens. IUCN supported as did several countries. The U.S. intervened to support. At our request, the U.S. intervention also included a caution that before any quotas are considered, Mexico has work to do in terms of a management plan which should include consultation with the range states of which U.S. is one.

Woolly Mammoth Proposal (CoP18 Prop. 13): Israel submitted a proposal to list woolly mammoth in Appendix II. In the end, the proposal was withdrawn and a new decision was submitted that directs the CITES Secretariat, subject to external funding, to conduct a study concerning trade of mammoth ivory and what impact that has on illegal trade of elephant ivory. They are to report findings to the Standing Committee. The proposed decisions were accepted by consensus.



Small-clawed Otter and the Smooth-coated Otter Proposal (CoP18 Props. 6 & 7): The Team was interested in these proposals as they might relate to or impact river otter an Appendix II listed species. The proposals recommended transferring the two species from Appendix II to Appendix I. Both proposals highlighted an undefined increase in trade for the pet market with some information on population declines in the wild. Both proposals were approved. The U.S. voted yes.

Inclusion of Species in Appendix III (CoP18 Doc. 100): The Team was satisfied with the draft decisions and the edits to Resolution 9.25 (Rev. CoP17) in the document submitted to the CoP. The discussion of the document in plenary was brief with minor changes to its content before being adopted. The Team will continue to monitor this issue.

Sea Cucumber Proposal (CoP18 Prop. 45): The European Union's (EU) proposal to list three species of sea cucumber in Appendix II was adopted. Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific territories are included in two species' ranges. However, the states are at the edge of the species range, there is no international trade, and, in some cases, harvest is banned. The Team has spoken with the EU in the past and reminded them that the state agencies manage the species. This listing should not impact their conservation and management.

Mako Shark Proposal (CoP18 Prop. 42): There was considerable discussion around the proposal from Mexico to list these shark species on Appendix II. There were many interventions, both for and against including a debate on population trends. A vote by secret ballot was requested by Japan. The proposal was adopted with the support of 71% of the Parties. The U.S. voted against the proposal.



CITES Technical Work Group Report



Additional Meetings, Discussions, and Side Events of Note

- **Electronic permitting:** The Team continues to have discussions with USFWS, the wood products and musical instrument industry, and others to determine how we can support and guide USFWS efforts to advance development of both interim and long-term improvements to permitting, with the ultimate goal of online application, processing, and permit issuance.
- **American Alligator:** Outside of the context of CITES, some of the Team met with alligator farmers from Louisiana and members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Crocodile Specialist Group to discuss trade and policy issues in the U.S. In addition, our Team met with the Ireland delegation to address their concerns about levels of “wild” American alligator products on the world market. They indicated that they were satisfied following the discussion.
- **Meeting with the CITES Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero:** The Team met with the new CITES Secretary-General. Ms. Higuero shared some perspectives on sustainable use and livelihoods that were positive. We discussed ways the states might assist with sustainable use issues in CITES.
- **Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Side Events:** There were two side events that promoted sustainable use and community livelihoods. They highlighted examples of community-based conservation efforts that include trade and support both species conservation and livelihoods. Examples included polar bear conservation in Canada, crocodile conservation in Kenya and Australia, etc. More information and fact sheets are located [here](#).
- **Sustainable Harvest and Trade of Wild Meat:** The side event included presentations from the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), IUCN, and TRAFFIC. They discussed several aspects of the sustainable use and trade of wild meat and provided examples of its use from around the world including in Canada through the Wild Harvest Initiative.
- **International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) Dinner:** The CIC hosted a dinner for numerous organizations and entities that support the sustainable use of wildlife. It was a good opportunity for some Team members to engage with sustainable use partners across the globe.
- **CBD and CITES:** A panel discussed how sustainable trade and sustainable use could be integrated into the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework being developed by the Convention on Biological Diversity. They proposed some interesting options that will assist the states in considering their comments on the Framework.
- **Polar Bear and CITES:** The international branch of the German Naturschutzbund (NABU) hosted the side event and called for a renewed effort to uplist polar bear at the next CoP. They presented information from a report they have published (*Sold Out. Polar Bears: Caught Between Skin Trade, Climate Change and Guns*). They stated that the report has evidence that there is insufficient control of trade in polar bear skins and that trade in polar bears is not sustainable.
- **Southeast Asian Reptile Conservation Alliance (SARCA):** SARCA provided an overview of the reptile skin trade (snakes & lizards) in southeastern Asian countries and the structure and mission of SARCA. The SARCA’s work is helping ensure sustainable trade, reducing incentives for illegal trade, and promoting animal welfare strategies. SARCA includes partners from the luxury products industry, government (i.e., Malaysian CITES Authority), intergovernmental, and non-governmental members. The presenters demonstrated how sustainable use of wild caught specimens can be a tool for species conservation and provide social, cultural, and economic benefits to local communities.
- **Small-clawed Otter in the Pet Trade:** This side event was an emotion-based presentation on the ills of keeping live otters as pets with a plea to support an Appendix I listing for the small-clawed otter. While we were unable to get an explanation about the relevance to CITES and trade data on the species, the question we raised effectively reminded the attendees that CITES is a scientific-based trade treaty and not an emotionally-based animal rights treaty.
- **Non-CITES Listed Trade Enforcement:** A meeting with members of the U.S. Delegation, including Rick Jacobson, was held with members of the Republic of Korean Delegation to begin exploration of opportunities to enhance trade enforcement in non-CITES listed species. Follow up discussions are planned for fall 2019.
- **Seahorse Conservation:** Project Seahorse and the IUCN have developed a web-based tool kit that provides relevant information related to management of seahorses. It can be found at www.iucn-seahorse.org/cites-toolkit.

CITES Technical Work Group:

Mike Bednarski: NEAFAW CITES Representative

Carolyn Caldwell: MAFWA CITES Representative

Buddy Baker: SEAFWA CITES Representative

Jim deVos: WAFWA CITES Representative

Staff: Deb Hahn: Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Rick Jacobson: U.S. CITES Delegate for State Fish & Wildlife Agencies



To learn more about the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, visit the CITES website at: <http://www.cites.org/>

CITES Technical Work Group

Dedicated to preserving state fish and wildlife agency authority and promoting their interests in the implementation of CITES



1



Carolyn Caldwell (2003)
Terrestrial Endangered Species & Wildlife Diversity Program
Ohio Division of Wildlife (retired)



Michael Bednarski (2019)
Chief of the Aquatic Wildlife Resources Division
Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries



Jim deVos (2013)
Assistant Director for Wildlife Management
Arizona Game & Fish Department



Deborah Hahn (2011)
International Relations Director
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
Arizona Game & Fish Department (unpaid employee)



Buddy Baker (2004)
Chief of Wildlife Management for the Coastal & Non-game Division
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

2



Each Technical Work Group representative serves at the pleasure of the Directors of their Regional Association

Collectively the 4 regional representatives form the CITES Technical Work Group of the International Relations Committee of AFWA

3

CITES Technical Work Group Represents all 50 State Fish & Wildlife Agencies.

Implemented in 1994, this approach has proven more efficient and cost effective than each State Fish & Wildlife Agency engaging independently in the CITES process.



4

CITES Federal/State Coordination Procedure

Penned in 1997 and reauthorized in 2014 to provide meaningful and timely input by the States on USFWS regulatory proposals, policies, and administrative actions regarding CITES implementation.

- **State Fish & Wildlife Agencies are represented by the CITES Technical Work Group**
- **Full participate in the interagency CITES Coordination Committee (CCC)**
- **Member of the US delegation**
 - CoP: AFWA International Relations Committee Chair
 - SC: if deemed beneficial by the States
- **Exchange information and discuss CITES administrative & policy issues at closed door Federal/State meeting(s)**

5

Work Group Responsibilities:

assure state fish and wildlife agencies are appraised of pending CITES issues and can respond.

provide a streamlined approach to requesting changes in federal and/or international policies to accommodate state fish and wildlife agency needs.

formulate and advocate for policy positions reflecting the interests of state fish and wildlife agencies in international forums.



6

minimize unnecessary oversight and restrictions to state fish and wildlife agency authority as a result of CITES' issues.

provide biological and administrative information to assist the federal government in executing its international responsibilities.

ensure the federal government understands and reacts positively to the needs and authority of state fish and wildlife agencies as it relates to CITES.

support sustainable use principles and the North American Model internationally.



7

8

Climate Change

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies: Climate Change Technical Working Committee Report

June 2020

Meeting Time and Place

Committee met by conference call on March 16, 2020.

Attendance:

Six states were in attendance: IL: Leon Hinz; IN: Brad Feaster; MI: Chris Hoving, Amy Derosier; MO: Jacob Westoff; NE: Caroline Jezierski; SD: Eileen Dowd Stukel.

Executive Summary:

The committee had not met since 2018, so this first call was designed as a reconnect. Staff provided updates on what their states have been involved in related to climate adaptation and mitigation, much of which is also tied to the State Wildlife Action Plans.

Director Action Items:

None

Director Information Items:

1. AFWA has started leading the National Fish and Wildlife Plants Climate Strategy and plan to develop additional guidance to State Wildlife Action Plans.
2. Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center had a stakeholder advisory committee meeting March 23, 2020 and this MAFWA committee had a representative at the meeting. Regional research priorities were discussed, and it was announced that a new Midwest CASC would be created over the course of FY2020.
3. Coordination for the MAFWA Climate Change Technical Working Committee over the next year will be through Michigan's representatives.

Time and Place of Next Meeting:

In 2020-2021, the committee will meet quarterly by conference call.

Deer & Wild Turkey

2019 Proceedings
Midwest Deer & Wild Turkey Study Group Meeting
August 12-14, 2019
Nashville, Indiana



Submitted by:

Steve Backs, Joe Caudell, and Olivia Vaught

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

January 2020



MIDWEST
Association of
Fish & Wildlife
Agencies

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Background | 1 |
| Meeting Time and Place | 1 |
| Attendance..... | 1 |
| Executive Summary..... | 1 |
| Business Meeting | 2 |
| Director Action Items..... | 2 |
| Director Information Items | 2 |
| Time and Place of Next Meeting | 3 |
| Appendix 1: Attendance List | 4 |
| Appendix 2: Meeting Agenda..... | 6 |
| Appendix 3: Meeting Dates and Location History..... | 9 |
| Appendix 4: MAFWA Director Letter: Challenges facing Midwestern deer management | 11 |
| Appendix 5: 2019 Midwest Deer & Wild Turkey Study Group State Deer Reports | 14 |
| Illinois..... | 15 |
| Indiana | 21 |
| Iowa..... | 29 |
| Kansas | 41 |
| Kentucky..... | 54 |
| Michigan | 64 |
| Minnesota..... | 72 |
| Missouri | 85 |
| Nebraska | 91 |
| North Dakota..... | 98 |
| Ohio..... | 112 |
| Ontario..... | 122 |
| South Dakota..... | 128 |
| Wisconsin..... | 143 |
| Appendix 6: 2019 Midwest Deer & Wild Turkey Study Group State Wild Turkey Reports | 155 |
| Illinois..... | 156 |
| Indiana | 164 |
| Iowa..... | 177 |
| Kansas | 184 |
| Kentucky..... | 191 |
| Michigan | 200 |
| Minnesota..... | 203 |
| Missouri | 215 |
| Nebraska | 226 |
| North Dakota | 234 |
| Ohio..... | 244 |
| South Dakota..... | 254 |

Background

The Midwest Deer and Wild Turkey Study Group (MDWTSG) meeting is an annual gathering of wildlife managers sanctioned by and affiliated with the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Primary objectives of the meeting include dissemination of deer and wild turkey management strategies, discussion of emerging or existing issues associated with deer and wild turkey management, and coordination of regional deer and wild turkey management or research efforts. The meeting location rotates among the Midwestern states that are active within the group.

Forums such as the MDWTSG meeting provide valuable opportunities for state deer and turkey biologists to become acquainted with emerging issues and exchange information and ideas related to deer and turkey research and management. The need for state fish and wildlife agencies to establish and maintain deer and turkey biologist positions and support travel of these biologists to the annual MDWTSG meeting is imperative for exchanging information to promote quality wildlife management and research in each state. It is more important than ever that state agencies are at the forefront of issues related to deer and turkey management in order to protect the heritage and recreational opportunities of hunting for future sportsmen and sportswomen.

Meeting Time and Place

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) hosted the 2019 MDWTSG meeting at the Abe Martin Lodge, Brown County State Park in Nashville, Indiana on August 12-14. The MDWTSG appreciates the financial support provided by the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) and the logistical support provided by Mr. Brian MacGowan and the Indiana Chapter of The Wildlife Society.

Attendance

A total of 56 participants and speakers attended the 2019 meeting including state deer and wild turkey biologists from 11 Midwest member states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin) and biologists and researchers from the NWTf, QDMA, Indiana University, Purdue University, and Qualtrics. Representatives from North Dakota, Ontario, and South Dakota were unable to attend.

Executive Summary

Attendees at the 2019 MDWTSG meeting were welcomed by John Davis, Deputy Director, Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Following the meeting introduction, there were seven presentations during the joint session on topics related to human dimensions in wildlife, including:

- The effects of cognitive bias on the decision making process
- Diversity and inclusion in hunting culture
- Including survey data from the public in wildlife management
- E-regulation compliance
- QDMA's successes and failures of getting people involved

The human dimensions theme continued during the afternoon joint session with presentations on the following topics:

- Citizen based monitoring surveys

- Assessing public perceptions of deer
- Basics of qualitative research with children
- Engaging stakeholders in CWD management
- Qualtrics – a survey and data collection software

On day two, the deer and wild turkey break-out sessions occurred, including discussion on the following:

- Deer Study Group
 - Setting yearly deer harvest
 - Discussion on the various approaches to setting harvest limits, methods and techniques used, and successes and failures.
 - Important topics for the next 10 years of deer management for Midwestern states
 - The group created a list of topics and chose the top two: declining hunter numbers and management of chronic wasting disease. A letter was drafted explaining the anticipated challenges over the next decade and will be submitted to the AFWA Director's meeting in June 2020 (Appendix 4).
 - Venison donation programs
 - Cultural and management aspect of deer hunting in Europe
 - Data on crossbow users

- Wild Turkey Study Group
 - Indiana's web based Brood Survey and Illustrative Guide
 - Forest management implications of songbird studies on the Hoosier Hardwood Ecosystem (HHE) project
 - Fifty-year assessment of Indiana Spring Turkey Harvest parameters
 - Wild Turkey harvest trends in the Midwest
 - Urban wild turkey issues
 - Shot size and material composition (density) as it relates to the intent of 2005 National Wild Turkey Hunter Safety Task Force recommendations
 - Michigan Wild Turkey Habitat Enhanced Management Initiative (THEM)
 - NWTf year in review

Business Meeting

The business meeting was conducted as a joint session involving both deer and wild turkey program leaders. The Southeast Deer Study Group is interested in hosting a joint meeting with the Midwest Deer Study Group. The group discussed this possibility including logistics, potential topics, and whether to extend an invitation to the Southeast Wild Turkey Group. Both deer and wild turkey leaders were supportive of this opportunity. Kentucky and Ohio will look into it more.

Director Actions Items

The MDWTSG does not have any action items for directors to report from this meeting.

Director Information Items

The MDWTSG would like to inform the Midwest Directors of the following items:

- The MDWTSG meeting was focused on human dimensions topics to broaden knowledge of the use of social science in wildlife management.
- The Midwest Deer Group created a list of key issues that are likely to be significant challenges for the future of Midwest deer management. A letter was drafted to the Midwest Directors focused on the top two issues: declining hunter numbers and management of chronic wasting disease. The goal of this communication is to allow for understanding of current deer biologists' recommendations related to these issues and to provide context for future action items. The letter is in Appendix 4.
- States in the Midwest Wild Turkey Group agreed to share harvest and production data to identify common trends while pursuing factors that may explain the decline in harvests. This was a continuance of the multi-state collaborative effort initiated in the Midwest and Southeast study groups several years ago.
- The Southeast Deer Study Group is interested in hosting a joint meeting with the Midwest Deer Study Group next year.

Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next MDWTSG meeting will be hosted by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources August 17-19, 2020, at the Maumee Bay Lodge and Conference Center, Maumee Bay State Park in Oregon, Ohio.

Appendix 1: Attendance List

List of participants: 2019 Midwest Deer & Wild Turkey Study Group meeting, Nashville, Indiana.

| First Name | Last Name | Agency | Email | Phone |
|------------|-------------------|---|--|---------------------------|
| Luke | Garver | Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources | luke.garver@illinois.gov | 217-782-4377 |
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| Alexis | Caudell | Indiana University | abpeirce@indiana.edu | |
| Norman | Makoto Su | Indiana University | normsu@indiana.edu | 812-855-1760 |
| Jim | Coffey | Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources | james.coffey@dnr.iowa.gov | 641-774-2958 |
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| Reina | Tyl | Missouri Dept. of Conservation | reina.tyl@mdc.mo.gov | 573-815-7901 ext. 2901 |
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| | | | | |
|---------|------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------|
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Appendix 2: Meeting Agenda

Midwest Deer and Wild Turkey Study Group Meeting

August 12-14, 2019

Abe Martin Lodge at Brown County State Park

Nashville, IN

AGENDA



Monday, August 12, 2019

4:00-8:00 p.m. Arrival and Registration (*Cabin #905*); Check into your cabin or hotel room up at the Hotel Lobby.

6:00-8:00 p.m. Light social (*Cabin #905*)

Tuesday, August 13, 2019

8 -8:45 a.m. Registration continued (*outside of Melodeon*)

7:30-8:30 a.m. Breakfast (*Allison Peabody*)

8:30-9:00 a.m. Welcome, Announcements, Introductions (*Melodeon*)

John Davis, Deputy Director, IN Dept. of Natural Resources

Joe Caudell, Deer Biologist, IN Dept. of Natural Resources

Steve Backs, Turkey Biologist, IN Dept. of Natural Resources

9:00-10:15 a.m. Joint Meeting - Topic Human Dimensions of Wildlife (*Melodeon*)

- Joe Caudell, Indiana DNR - Cognitive Bias and how it Affects the Decision Making Process of Both Customer and Wildlife Managers
- Norman Makoto Su, Indiana University – Diversity and Inclusion in Hunting Culture: Ethnography and the Design of Technology
- Colleen Hartel, Indiana DNR – Beyond Polls of Public Opinion: Survey Data and Wildlife Management

10:15-10:30 a.m. Break (*snacks available in Melodeon*)

10:30-12:00 p.m. Joint Meeting - Topic Human Dimensions of Wildlife (*Melodeon*)

- Joe Caudell, Indiana DNR – Incorporating Public Opinion and Data into Deer Management Decisions
- Emily McCallen, Indiana DNR – Making the Most of What We Have: Utilizing Biological and Human Dimensions Data to Support Management Decisions
- Brian Dhuey, Wisconsin – E-regulation compliance: Assessing Compliance with Electronic Deer Harvest Regulation
- Matt Ross, QDMA - QDMA's Successes and Failures at Getting Folks Involved: A Trip Down Memory Lane

12:00-1:00 p.m. Lunch (*Allison Peabody*)

1:30-3:00 p.m. Joint Meeting - Topic Human Dimensions of Wildlife (*Melodeon*)

- Brian Dhuey, Wisconsin DNR – Citizen Based Monitoring Surveys: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly
- Taylor Stinchcomb, Purdue University – Assessing Public Perceptions of Deer: Qualitative vs Quantitative Approaches
- Alexis B. Peirce Caudell, Indiana University – The Basics of Qualitative Research with Children
- Jacob M. Peterson, Purdue University – Engaging Stakeholders in CWD Management Through Agent-based Models
- Tommy Hoschouer, Qualtrics – The Advanced Capabilities of Qualtrics as a Survey and Data Collection Platform

3:00-3:30 p.m. Break

3:30-4:30 p.m. Joint Business Meeting (*Melodeon*)

6:00-10:00 p.m. Dinner and Social (*Lower Shelter*)

Wednesday, August 14, 2019

8:00-9:00 a.m. Breakfast (*Allison Peabody*)

9:00-12:00 p.m. State Status Reports & Individual Group Meetings (*Deer in Melodeon, Turkey in Priness*)

12:00-1:00 p.m. Lunch (*Allison Peabody*)

1:00-4:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions and Discussions Continue (*Deer in Melodeon, Turkey in Priness*)

6:00-9:00 p.m. Dinner and Social (*on own, but group reservations at Big Wood Pizza in Nashville, IN*)

Appendix 3: Meeting Dates and Location History

Previous Midwest Deer & Wild Turkey Study Group meeting locations.

| Year | State | Location | Date |
|------|--------------|--|-----------------------|
| 1977 | Missouri | Missouri Fountain Grove Wildlife Area | January 17-19 |
| 1978 | Wisconsin | Wisconsin Wyalusing State Park | January 16-17 |
| 1979 | Iowa | Iowa Rathburn Fish Hatchery | January 15-18 |
| 1980 | Minnesota | Minnesota Whitewater State Park | January 21-24 |
| 1981 | Indiana | Indiana Harrison-Crawford State Park | January 19-22 |
| 1982 | Ohio | Ohio Lake Hope State Park | January 18-21 |
| 1983 | Nebraska | Nebraska Louisville 4-H Camp | January 17-21 |
| 1984 | Kansas | Kansas Camp Aldrich | January 16-19 |
| 1985 | South Dakota | South Dakota Black Hills | May 7-10 |
| 1986 | North Dakota | North Dakota Camp-of-the-Cross | January 20-23 |
| 1987 | Michigan | Michigan Kellogg Biological Station | January 27-29 |
| 1988 | Illinois | Illinois Touch of Nature | February 1-4 |
| 1989 | Missouri | Missouri YMCA Camp of the Ozarks | January 23-26 |
| 1990 | Wisconsin | Wisconsin Bethel Horizons Prairie Center | January 15-18 |
| 1991 | Iowa | Iowa Conservation Education Center | January 14-17 |
| 1992 | Minnesota | Minnesota Whitewater State Park | January 13-16 |
| 1993 | Indiana | Indiana Harrison-Crawford State Park | January 11-14 |
| 1994 | Ohio | Ohio Canter's Cave 4-H Park | January 30-February 2 |
| 1995 | Nebraska | Nebraska Mahoney State Park | January 15-18 |
| 1996 | Kansas | Kansas Camp Pecusa | January 14-16 |
| 1997 | South Dakota | South Dakota Camp NeSoDak | August 24-27 |
| 1998 | North Dakota | North Dakota Camp Grafton | August 9-12 |
| 1999 | Ontario | Ontario Blue Springs Scout Reserve | August 15-18 |
| 2000 | Michigan | Michigan Thunder Bay Resort | August 20-23 |
| 2001 | Illinois | Illinois Dixon Springs Ag. Station | August 19-22 |
| 2002 | Missouri | Missouri Conception Abbey | August 18-21 |
| 2003 | Wisconsin | Wisconsin Bethel Horizons Prairie Center | August 24-27 |
| 2004 | Iowa | Iowa Conservation Education Center | August 22-25 |
| 2005 | Minnesota | Minnesota Eagle Bluff Envir. Learning Center | August 21-24 |
| 2006 | Indiana | Indiana Camp Ransburg, BSA | August 20-23 |
| 2007 | Ohio | Ohio Canter's Cave 4-H Park | August 19-22 |
| 2008 | Nebraska | Nebraska Fort Robinson State Park | September 14-17 |
| 2009 | Kansas | Kansas Rock Springs 4-H Camp | September 14-17 |
| 2010 | North Dakota | North Dakota Camp Grafton | August 22-25 |
| 2011 | Michigan | Michigan Ralph A. MacMullen Center | September 25-28 |
| 2012 | South Dakota | South Dakota Custer State Park | October 16-19 |
| 2013 | Illinois | Illinois Allerton Park | August 18-21 |
| 2014 | Missouri | Missouri YMCA Camp of the Ozarks | September 9-12 |
| 2015 | Wisconsin | Wisconsin Perlstein Conference Center | September 8-11 |

| | | | |
|------|-----------|---|--------------|
| 2016 | Kentucky | Kentucky General Butler State Resort Park | August 22-25 |
| 2017 | Iowa | Iowa Honey Creek State Park Resort | August 28-31 |
| 2018 | Minnesota | Minnesota Camp Ripley | August 27-30 |
| 2019 | Indiana | Indiana Brown County State Park | August 12-14 |

Appendix 4: MAFWA Director Letter: Challenges facing Midwestern deer management



December 16, 2019

To: Directors, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

From: Midwest Deer Study Group

Subject: Challenges facing Midwestern deer management over the next 10 years

Esteemed Directors of Midwest Fish and Wildlife Agencies:

The Midwest Deer and Turkey Study Group is an annual gathering of wildlife managers sanctioned by and affiliated with the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA). This group represents each state's designated experts on deer and turkey population management responsible for the sustainable future of each resource. Historically, the group dates to around 1949, with the development of a statement of purpose in 1958. The Great Lakes Deer Group, as they were called then, identified four primary reasons for meeting: 1) to promote better interchange of information and engage in discussions on matters pertaining to deer and deer range, 2) to improve the understanding of conditions in various territories and states, 3) to supplement the work of the Midwest and North American meetings, and 4) to make recommendations on specific topics, practices, and coordinate research as requested by administrative agencies. These four goals are adhered to with present day meetings.

Following the 2019 Midwest Deer and Turkey Study Group meeting, the deer study group felt it important to provide MAFWA Directors with a short list of key issues that we foresee being significant challenges for the future of Midwest deer management, and to provide context for future action items we may bring to your attention in the coming years. By communicating these concerns, we feel there will be a greater understanding of present-day recommendations from deer program biologists and administrators who are anticipating impacts from these challenges in the future. The top two issues identified by members of the Midwest Deer Study Group are declining hunter numbers and management of chronic wasting disease.

Declining Hunter Numbers

Deer hunters make up the majority, and financial backbone, of most wildlife agencies and routinely make up over 80% of all license buyers. From an operational standpoint, loss of these hunters will contribute to budget shortfalls. In addition, the continual decline of hunters across the Midwest will further limit our ability to effectively manage deer populations. Most Midwestern states are seeing a 2-4% loss of hunters annually. Over the next 10 years, it's probable that hunter numbers will be >15% lower than present day numbers, which are already inadequate to manage deer populations in some areas. In turn we can expect an increased risk to the public (deer-vehicle collisions, Lyme and other tick-borne illnesses, etc.), agricultural damage, habitat degradation, and spread of transmissible diseases such as CWD and potentially Bovine tuberculosis where they exist.

Management of Chronic Wasting Disease

There is nearly universal agreement amongst deer biologists that CWD is one of the top priorities facing deer management for generations to come. Driving much of this concern is uncertainty regarding the impacts that CWD will have on deer populations and hunter numbers in the future. Though much is being learned through research in places like Wyoming, Colorado, and Wisconsin about how CWD impacts deer populations over time, many states have responded to CWD by taking preventative action (ex. baiting bans, herd reduction, carcass movement restrictions, etc.) in the face of an uncertain outcome until new information or new management tools become available. Current management strategies have been politically unpopular and have been obstructed before their efficacy could be demonstrated, leading to limited success in eradicating CWD or reducing its footprint on the landscape. Without noticeable improvements, constituents may lose trust in agencies' ability to manage its resource.

Future Support of Deer Programs

These two threats - declining hunters and CWD - are not independent of one another. As CWD continues to spread across the landscape, it's plausible that widespread CWD could exacerbate the loss of hunters or the difficulty in managing deer populations with existing hunters. Identifying how agencies function in a "new normal" with fewer hunters and CWD on the landscape is one of the greatest adaptation exercises we face in modern day wildlife management.

There are several ways our group feels that Directors can support deer programs to help ease some of the anticipated effects of declining hunter numbers and presence of CWD:

- Work closely with elected officials to support science-based deer management decisions that are made in the best interest of the resource, while working to prevent legislation that either limits deer management options or is likely to have adverse effects on deer populations.
- Support CWD research that assists managers with determining the effectiveness of disease management strategies.
- Continue dialogue with your deer program staff to ensure that deer program priorities are being addressed by the Department.
- Support your agency's deer program staff whose recommendations are based on the best, long-term interest of the resource.
- Recognize that deer management recommendations, particularly with respect to CWD, may not always be popular among constituents and may deviate from previous management approaches. However, with an ever-changing culture and landscape, and as new information becomes available, it will be important for deer programs to be adaptable in the future.

We thank you for the continued opportunity to meet as a group and discuss present and future issues associated with Midwest deer management. Should you have any questions, each state's respective deer program leader would be happy to discuss any of these topics.

Sincerely,

Midwest Deer Study Group

Fig. 4. Prairie spring harvest projections from 1995-2018.

Feral Swine

MAFWA Ad-hoc Feral Swine Committee – 2020 Annual Report

Complied and Submitted by Steven E. Backs, Chr., MAFWA Ad-hoc Feral Swine Committee 4/8/2020



Two gravid adult Eurasian sows removed during aerial gunning conducted in Indiana, March 16, 2020, as part of the National Feral Swine Damage Management Program; illustrates how 2 sows left on the landscape would have potentially resulted in a 13 pig a sounder by May, certainly posing a threat to native flora and ground nesting fauna as well as agricultural crops (*photo credit: D. Ray*)

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) established the Midwest Ad-hoc Feral Swine Committee (MFSC) in 2013. The purpose of the feral swine committee is to further MAFWA's function of promoting the conservation and management of wildlife resources in the face of rapidly expanding feral swine populations which directly endanger those wildlife resources. The Committee is to collect and compare feral swine information among the member States and Provinces, and to provide management and policy recommendations to the Directors of MAFWA.

MISSION: Develop results-driven and science-based management actions to prevent the introduction and spread of feral swine and promote the eradication of existing populations of these animals in the Midwest.

CHARGES:

- 1) Develop management plans for feral swine based on sound scientific and proven methods.
- 2) Promote and encourage research on economically feasible and effective methods of feral swine control.
- 3) Encourage uniform polices on the translocation and interstate movement of feral swine.
- 4) Discuss the role of federal entities in the control of feral swine in the Midwest.
- 5) Encourage partnerships among states and between state and federal entities to unify the battle against the spread of feral swine.
- 6) Advise the MAFWA Directors on issues relating to feral swine policy, inform the Directors of committee actions and execute any directives given by them.

MAFWA Ad Hoc Feral Swine Committee 2020 Annual Meeting/Progress Report

Meeting Time and Place: The annual meeting of the MAFWA Feral Swine Committee (MFSC) was originally scheduled to be held jointly with the Wild Hog Working Group of the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) at the 2020 International Wild Pig Conference and National Wild Pig Task Force (NWPTF) meeting, April 6-9th in Jacksonville, Florida. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak the conference and meetings were postponed, possible new dates TBD. During the 4/7/20 conference call, the NWPTF governing board proposed exploring "virtual" Wild Pig Conference with pre-recorded presentations from the 2020 conference presenters, possibly a wild pig session at the Animal Damage Conference, April 2021, or at the SEAFWA conference in VA in 2021. A venue was secured for 2022 International Conference in Nashville, TN, in April. The MAFWA and SEAFWA pig group chairs will likely seek a joint meeting again at one of the venues.

Summary: The MAFWA Feral Swine Committee annual report is summarily reduced to the respective State and Provincial reports summarily submitted with the primary function of the MAFWA Feral Swine Committee being information and exchange network among states and provinces. The committee recently updated and compiled information on the legal hunting status of wild pigs in the Midwest states. The recent involvement of the Canadian provinces in the MAFWA Feral Swine Committee was stimulated in part by concerns over the possible arrival of African Swine Fever (AFS) from Asian countries and their desire to know about wild pig control techniques used in the states. Canada's Federal department of Environment and Climate Change has recently provided project funding to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) to coordinate efforts across Canadian jurisdictions in addressing the invasive wild pig issue. The CWHC has since established two working groups; one strategic group to lead policy development and strategic planning for national priorities and goals, and one operational group to facilitate information sharing of technical information and expertise. The number of feral swine/wild pigs removed continues to increase in the more heavily wild pig populated states in the Midwest, with significant reductions in wild pig numbers and distributions in some Midwest states with lower pig numbers. Most of the work in the Midwest states is to be conducted by USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services through cooperative agreements with states as part of the National Feral Swine Damage Management Program (NFSDMP).

The term "elimination" in terms of eliminating feral swine is loosely defined as experienced by Illinois in 2019 when some feral swine reappeared on their landscape in two different locations and the source of those pigs was not reported. The reappearance of feral swine in Illinois also illustrates the value of DNA profiling to determine source or origin. Kentucky and Kansas appear to be gaining some ground in feral swine in some parts of the state but as Kentucky reported this year, they still have some sizable populations to address. Kentucky has launched a well-organized social media and outreach effort modeled after Missouri's outreach programs. Missouri continues to remove a large number of wild pigs (>10,000) at a sizable cost to the Missouri Department of Conservation. Michigan has experienced a sizable reduction in feral swine but continues to keep their outreach efforts going in hopes of warding off future illegal releases of feral swine. Ohio is working toward narrowing their elimination priorities and again demonstrated that that wild pig shooting preserves can be a troublesome source.

As in previous years, the resistance and lack of cooperation by some landowners continues to be an obstacle to eliminating wild pigs, essentially creating 'wild pig refuges' or source populations that eventually disperse back into areas where pig removal was successful. The paradox is that some of these uncooperative, "recreation" type landowners is that they are frequently recipients of State and Federal incentives for conservation practices or easements. Related to the pig refuge issue, is a new work around of existing feral swine regulations in at least one state, is to ear tag captured wild pigs, call them domestic, and then hunt them inside high fence.

A continual, chronic and often increasing problem facing all States and Provinces is the apparent abandonment, poorly confined, illegally released or dumped carcasses of pot-bellied, Heritage, Heirloom pigs or hybrids thereof. Inherent to their existence, are issues related to their legal definition or status within a respective jurisdiction often compromise removal or elimination. Many municipal animal control personnel are reluctant to deal with these pigs and occasionally these pigs develop a social media following of sympathizers. Unfortunately, these types of pigs will persist as free-ranging populations, will cause damage to native flora and fauna, residential lawns, or agricultural row crops and are potential disease sources, something of particular interest with AFS concerns. Fortunately, if removal is possible, their general lack of wariness and relative athleticism due to their likely origin, facilitates removal but those removal efforts taxes limited personnel time and resources that could be addressing more critical feral swine/wild pig problems.

Director Action Items: Charge 1; Begin development of a broad Midwest feral swine management plan based on sound scientific and proven methods. The MFSC continues to table this charge due to the continual evolution of more effective wild pig control techniques, ever increasing and fast evolving body of knowledge from ongoing research, increasing efforts of the (USDA-AHPIS-WS), facilitated by the existence of the NWPTF. Charges 2-6 are being accomplished through continued networking among the Committee representatives, attendance at the IWPC and representative participation in the NWPTF that unfortunately put on temporary hold with the COVID-19 outbreak. Most states are participating in partnerships or agreements with USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services as part of the National Feral Swine Damage Management Program (NFSDMP) funded under the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills.

Director Information Items: The value of the information exchanged at the IWPC and NWPTF meetings is invaluable to keeping abreast of the rapidly evolving “state of the art and science’ of wild pig population control and hopefully, eventual elimination. The MFSC encourages providing support for representative attendance at both the IWPC and NWPTF meetings when possible, recognizing that participation of all MFSC representatives is beyond their primary or even secondary job responsibilities. The NWPTF website is now housed at The Berryman Institute at Utah State University and now handles organizing and communications related to the NWPTF and IWPC’s. The NWPTF has received some temporary funding (\$20K/Year) to allow the NWPTF time to secure more permanent collective funding sources, e.g. Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) or regional organizations, e.g., SEAFWA and MAFWA.

One proposed funding mechanism is to secure membership funding in the form of a group or regional organization level dues from SEAFWA and MAFWA. The NWPTF and The Berryman Institute are developing a list of future “deliverables”. The MAFWA Feral Swine Committee would like the MAFWA Directors to consider this proposed group membership dues proposal and advise the Committee how this might be pursued.

Time and Place of Next Meeting: TBD presumably after the COVID-19 outbreak subsides to manageable and safe levels across the country.

MAFWA Ad Hoc Feral Swine Committee – State and Provincial Representatives

| | | |
|-----------|---|--|
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| SD | not participating | |
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| MB | Janine Wilmot, | Janine.Wilmot@gov.mb.ca , 204-281-2924 |
| SK | keep informed: | Todd Whiklo at 306-778 8262 todd.whiklo@gov.sk.ca |

State/Province Status Reports Submitted

Illinois (submitted by Brad Wilson, USDA, WS)

IDNR has teamed up with USDA – Wildlife Services (WS) to identify areas with feral swine (FS), develop and implement a technical assistance program for landowners experiencing FS conflicts, coordinate and expand disease surveillance, conduct outreach to stakeholders and the general public, and provide direct control management assistance. Technical assistance and/or direct control assistance has been provided to numerous State, County, and Private land owners throughout the state since 2011 and a total of 485 FS have been removed. A total of four known, self-sustaining breeding populations of FS in Illinois have been successfully eliminated. IDNR and WS continue to monitor reports of FS received from deer and turkey hunters as well as citizens throughout the state. Follow-up investigations are conducted to confirm the presence of this invasive species. A total of 38 reports were investigated in 2019, with one new isolated population of FS being confirmed in Pope County as well as one adult boar in Pulaski County.

After local hunters and agricultural producers alerted WS to an emerging FS population in Pike County, IL, the USDA-WS program worked closely with the IDNR, Pike County Soil and Water Conservation District, Pike County Farm Bureau, Illinois Department of Agriculture, USDA NRCS, and the Illinois State Police (aerial surveys) to identify the source of this population. WS removed 26 FS from the Township and continues to conduct surveillance for additional FS in the region. No other reports of FS among this area has been received since January, 2019.

WS has received reports of FS in Pope and Pulaski Counties in southern Illinois. On the ground surveillance and removal efforts began on March 19, 2019 in an effort to determine distribution, density and begin to eliminate populations before they become self-sustaining. WS has confirmed one adult boar among private properties in Pulaski County and at least 10 adult FS in Pope County among private properties and Shawnee National Forest lands spanning approximately 100 sq mi. FS damage management efforts among these two counties will continue through 2020.



(Pulaski County - 2019)

Indiana (submitted by S. E. Backs)

USDA-Wildlife Services and Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife (IDFW), IDNR personnel have continued efforts to reduce the number of Eurasian wild pigs from 3 counties in south-central Indiana. During the 2019 calendar year, USDA-WS field technicians removed 66 wild pigs (aerial 21, firearms 31, and live traps 14) and submitted 33 serum samples for Classical Swine Fever testing and archiving and 36 tissue samples for DNA profiling to the USDA-WS labs in Colorado. Since the inception of the National Feral Swine Damage Management Program (NFSDMP) in Indiana in 2014, nearly 600 wild pigs have been removed from Indiana through the USDA-WS and IDFW partnership. Prior to 2014, approximately 200 wild pigs were removed by USDA-WS and IDFW personnel from 2010-2013; total of roughly 800 wild pigs removed

since 2010 , not counting wild pigs removed by IDFW prior to 2010 and incidental take by landowners and hunters since wild pigs were released into Indiana around 1992.

Overall, the number of Eurasian wild pigs has been substantially reduced in the target 3 counties with the USDA-WS feral swine reduction project shifting toward the “elimination phase” with hopefully elimination completed in the next couple of years. The existence of “wild pig refuges” created by uncooperative landowners, generally for recreational hunting purposes (e.g., primary deer hunting leases), continues to be an obstacle to more effective overall pig removal. The refuges often serve as ‘source” populations replenishing the population voids created agency control efforts.

A chronic and an ever increasing swine problem across the state is the abandonment, poorly confined, illegally released or dumped (carcasses) pot-bellied/Heritage pigs that were likely unwanted pets. These pigs still pose a threat to native flora and fauna along with being a potential reservoir for swine pathogens. Free-ranging swine of all types can generally be destroyed on sight in Indiana with landowner permission, possession of a live wild pig and pursuit with dogs is not allowed. Wild pigs are on the list of invasive species in Indiana.

Iowa (Submitted by Jim Coffey)

The responsibility of State Feral Hog Coordinator falls under the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) forest wildlife program. Jim Coffey is the contact person for the agency. This position is located out of the Chariton Research Station in Chariton Iowa 24570 US Hwy 34 Chariton Iowa (641-774-2958). The Iowa DNR remains the coordinating agency for feral hog incidents working with several other State and Federal agencies. USDA wildlife services will continue to take a lead role on eradication and disease testing of located animals. The Iowa DNR depredation team and local conservation officers will assist when needed.

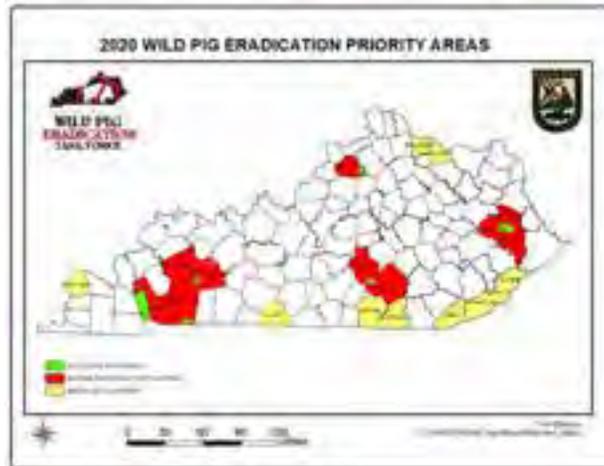
The 2019 calendar year was relatively uneventful. Less than a dozen reports of hogs came in from all parts of the State. Many of these reports were not confirmed. A few reports did include poor trail cam pictures but follow up could not confirm the presences of hogs in the area. Agencies did not kill any hogs during this year, however we did investigate a few dead hogs that turned out to be escaped/released domestic hogs. No disease testing was completed on these animals. We do plan on continuing with feral hog information in our DNR hunting regulations booklet for 2021. Several issues have arrived with a new executive administration as to the role state and federal agencies will be able to continue to monitor and control hogs in Iowa. We are working with the administration to clarify the authority and provide future guidance if feral hogs increase in the state.

Kansas (Submitted by S. Hesting, KDWPT and Curran Salter, USDA/APHIS/WS/KS)

We removed a total of 385 feral pigs in 2019 in Kansas counties (Bourbon/Linn-152; Cowley/Chautauqua-194; Cherokee/Labette-39). Same issues as always in Bourbon/Linn with landowner access. We have seen a noticeable decline in the southern part of this area from Xenia south, but pigs are still present in the northern part of Bourbon and extreme southern Linn. We are also observing a slow but steady increase in activity along the Arkansas River south of Ark City. KS WS removed 32 from this area last year and expect this trend to continue. We have been successful thus far at keeping feral pig densities very low along the state line from Ark City to Baxter Springs but continual “maintenance” efforts will be required for the foreseeable future. We will be flying next week and again in February and March.

Up to 2013, the USDA-WS eliminated approximately 6000 feral hogs. The total eliminated since the inception of the KDA/USDA-WS partnership is approximately 10,000.

Kentucky (submitted by Terri Bunjes)



KDFWR, in partnership with the KY Wild Pig Eradication Task Force, recently initiated a media campaign to increase public support for wild pig eradication. Similar to Missouri Department of Conservation's message, our "Report, don't shoot" campaign persuades the public to report wild pig sightings as an alternative to shooting pigs. The overall goal of the media campaign is to gain public support to prohibit wild pig sport hunting in the future. The media campaign included the creation of educational materials, social media videos, a complete webpage overhaul, the inclusion of an electronic reporting system, and articles in KY's Fish and Wildlife magazine and publications. Sample public outreach items are below and more information can be found at <https://fw.ky.gov/InvasiveSpecies/Pages/Wild-Pig-Home.aspx>



Kentucky currently has six known breeding populations and five areas of concern, covering twenty counties. Most breeding populations in KY have been reduced significantly. Joint efforts between USDA Wildlife Services (WS) and Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) resulted in the eradication of 48 wild pigs in 2019. Low numbers are indicative of shrinking populations due to the success of trapping and outreach efforts. Intensive eradication efforts in north central KY, have almost entirely eradicated the largest known population in KY. The last known sounder was removed September 2019. Concentrated surveillance and communication efforts have found no additional females. To our knowledge, only a few boars remain on the landscape. Almost 600 wild pigs have been removed from this population since 2016. In addition, surveillance efforts in the Pond River core pig range, located in

Muhlenburg and Christian counties, found no sign of pigs in 2019. Surveillance efforts will continue to determine if the population has been fully extinguished.

Two emerging populations on federal lands, Land between the Lakes National Recreation Area (LBL) in Trigg and Lyon counties and Fort Campbell U.S. Army Base in Christian County, have recently come to our attention. Wildlife Services and Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources collaborated with agency personnel and local government officials to develop eradication plans for LBL. As a result, aerial operations began January 2020, resulting in the removal of 194 wild pigs south of the KY border in Tennessee. Fort Campbell also allowed aerial operations this year. Two hundred wild pigs were removed in January 2020, with the majority removed from the KY portion of Ft. Campbell. Future discussions with Ft. Campbell leaders are necessary to facilitate the removal process.

Manitoba (submitted by Janine Wilmot)

Wild boar populations are not formally monitored or managed in Manitoba. However, the Province is aware of scattered populations, primarily in the southern areas of the province, and most abundantly in and around Spruce Woods Provincial Park. The public is requested to report wild boar sightings to the Province, but few reports are received annually. In 2018/19, seven reports of wild boar sightings were received, involving about 45 wild boar, including 20 that were reported harvested.

Manitoba does not have a funded program to remove wild boar from the landscape. Since 2001 Manitoba has been declared a Wild Boar Control Area, which allows residents of the province to shoot wild boar with few restrictions. Harvested wild boar are required to be reported to the Province within seven days, but the reports that are received likely represent only a fraction of the wild boar that are removed.

In 2018, Manitoba staff began working collaboratively with a local game and fish club to attempt corral trapping of wild boar sounders. Preliminary results have shown only minor success due to (1) difficulties in locating sounders where landowners are cooperative with trapping efforts, (2) technological difficulties in being able to remotely deploy the corral trap drop-gate, and (3) time constraints due to volunteer labor primarily being used for the project. The 2018/19 report for the project's first year indicated the removal of ten wild boar through these efforts.

Canada's Federal department of Environment and Climate Change has recently provided project funding to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) to coordinate efforts across Canadian jurisdictions in addressing the invasive wild pig issue. The CWHC has since established two working groups; one strategic group to lead policy development and strategic planning for national priorities and goals, and one operational group to facilitate information sharing of technical information and expertise. Manitoba has representatives on both working groups.

Michigan (submitted by Dwayne Etter)

Activity and Removal: We continue to receive a few scattered reports of feral swine throughout Michigan. Most confirmed reports are potbelly or escaped domestic pigs with only a few confirmed Russian boars. United States Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services (USDA-WS) removed 4 feral pigs in 2019.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) maintains a voluntary online feral swine reporting system. Because of the low number of voluntary feral swine reports received, MDNR asked all hunters registering a deer about feral swine sightings. This included over 30,000 hunters in 2019, and USDA-WS followed up on 92 reports of sightings. With partners USDA-WS and Michigan United Conservation Clubs we conducted 127 active outreach efforts including presentations, trainings and visits to schools.

Research: We contributed three peer-reviewed publications from research conducted in MI.

Gray, S.M., G.J. Roloff, D. B. Kramer, D.R. Etter, K. C. Vercauteren, and R.A. Montgomery. In press. Effects of wild pig disturbance on forest vegetation and soils. *Journal of Wildlife Management*.

Hauger, A.N., K.M. Hollis-Etter, D.R. Etter, G.J. Roloff, and A.R. Mahon. 2020. Use of environmental DNA (eDNA) in streams to detect feral swine (*Sus scrofa*). *PeerJ*, <https://peerj.com/articles/8287/>

Etter, D.R., M. Nichols and K.M. Hollis-Etter. 2020. Wild Pigs in the Northeast Region of North America. Pages 319-346 in K. Vercauteren, J. Beasley, S. Ditchkoff, J. Mayer, G. Roloff and B. Strickland, editors. *Invasive Wild Pigs in North America: Ecology, Impacts and Management*, 1st Edition. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL, USA, 480 pp.

Minnesota (Submitted by Eric Nelson)

In 2019, Minnesota continues to be free of feral swine. Currently our cases are mostly escaped domestic swine “at large”. We had one repeat location from previous years where swine were found to be living in the wild and removed by USDA Wildlife Services. Follow-up monitoring has resulted in no swine being detected. Sixteen feral swine complaints in 15 different counties were investigated through December, 2019.

One individual was cited with a warning for admitting to knowingly allow five swine to live in the wild and cause damage to surrounding properties. USDA Wildlife Services staff assisted in three site visits. In two site visits they provided monitoring and in one site visit they performed monitoring and removal. Landowners or USDA Wildlife Services staff removed nine swine living in the wild. At two locations, six swine were shot by the public on private land and surrendered to the department. Samples of all swine removed in the state were taken by USDA Wildlife Services and submitted for analysis.

We are reliant on USDA Wildlife Services to conduct all swine removal activities. Our DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife is funded by license fees so we do not have a funding mechanism to remove swine at large and living in the wild. An interagency feral swine committee is updating a draft feral swine response plan for the state. This draft will include lessons learned from citations/warnings issued as well as new information from a developing statewide response plan for African Swine Fever. The committee is composed of staff from Minnesota DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife and Ecological & Water Resources, USDA Wildlife Services, and Minnesota Board of Animal Health.

Missouri (Submitted by Alan Leary)

The Missouri Department of Conservation’s (MDC) Commission again fully funded the \$1.8 million Statewide Strategic Plan for Feral Hog Elimination in Missouri for FY20. The funding continues to go to a cooperative agreement with the US Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services (WS) to employ full time feral hog trappers and purchase equipment for them as called for in the Plan. Other members of the Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership (Partnership) have also made significant contributions to support elimination efforts in Missouri.

In 2019 the Partnership removed over 10,495 feral hogs from the landscape. That is about 1,100 more than we had in any previous year. In January and February of 2020 we have removed 2,223 feral hogs from the landscape.

During 2019 the Partnership worked to assist the US Forest Service in passing a ban on hog hunting on all Forest Service land in Missouri. The regulation was passed on Dec. 7, 2019. This was a major step in our feral hog elimination efforts here in Missouri. There were some groups that strongly opposed this regulation and therefore it received a lot of media and political attention. In order to address feral hog issues on these Forest Service lands, MDC has committed to sending 150 additional staff from around the state in groups of 50 for one week rotations to southern Missouri to work on feral hog elimination. This expanded effort will go from mid-January through March. The USDA – APHIS, US Forest Service and other members of the Partnership have also sent staff and provided additional resources for this expanded effort

The Partnership also continues to engage in an aggressive outreach campaign to educate the public about feral hogs and the damage they do to our fish, forest, and wildlife resources. These outreach efforts are also aimed at informing landowners that MDC and WS have staff that will assist them if they have feral hog issues on their property. The main message is “Report. Trap. Eliminate. Missouri’s Cooperative Feral Hog Solution.”

Nebraska (Submitted by Sam Wilson)

In 2003 the Nebraska State Legislature enacted statutes that prohibit pig hunting. Nebraska Game and Parks Commission regulations also prohibit the possession or release of wild pigs. These laws and regulations remove any incentive for people to own, move, or release feral pigs in the state. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is tasked with eliminating feral pigs upon their discovery. Eradication efforts have primarily taken place since 2004. Shooting from a helicopter – in cooperation with Wildlife Services – has proven to be the most successful method of eradication; although other methods such as trapping and shooting over bait are used. We believe the legal framework that removes incentives for people to own or release wild pigs has been the most important factor in allowing for the complete eradication of feral pigs in Nebraska. No feral pigs were removed during 2019 and there is no present research taking place. We do have minor issues with escaped pet (pot-bellied) and domestic pigs but we are not aware of any populations of wild-living feral pigs in Nebraska.

Ohio (submitted by J. Clint McCoy)

USDA Wildlife Services conducted feral swine surveillance and removal efforts on nearly 3 million acres of federal, state, and private lands. A total of 102 feral swine were removed from 6 counties (97 trapping, 5 sharpshooting), and 164 biological samples were collected from 31 animals. In FY19 Ohio Wildlife Services verified a total of \$7,189 of damage caused by feral swine via UAS, aerial (fixed wing/helicopter), and ground surveillance. While this estimate of damage was higher than FY18, it is still a drastic decrease from 2017 when WS verified \$23,990 and from 2016 where \$42,269 of damage was verified.

Prior to 2008, a lack of funding and resources limited the investigation of many feral swine reports in Ohio. Consequently, entire townships were designated as having feral swine, when many times the sightings or damage was misidentified, or the result of escaped domestic swine. In many cases, escaped domestic swine were recovered or removed by hunters, but the polygons were never removed from the map. In 2016, a plan was developed to remove erroneous polygons (elimination zones) from the Ohio feral swine distribution map. According to Wildlife Services National Feral Swine Damage Management Program, a population may be removed from the map if no sightings or damage have been confirmed in two years. In many cases, the polygons in question for the Ohio map have received little or no investigation since they were first submitted. After two years of investigation, Ohio Wildlife Services compiles the results for each Elimination Zone investigated and provides the results to the Ohio Joint Agency Feral Swine Task Force. If the task force agrees that sufficient effort has been made to declare the Elimination Zone “Feral Swine Free”, the polygon will be removed from the National (and Ohio) feral swine map. After two years of extensive surveillance efforts, using public outreach, meeting with landowners, and UAS, fixed wing, helicopter surveys, the Ohio Joint Agency Feral Swine Task Force agreed to remove Zone K in Morgan County from Ohio’s feral swine population map.

In FY 19 Ohio WS was able to eliminate an emergent population of feral swine in Trumbull County. While investigating two hunter harvest reports Ohio WS located 22 feral swine in the immediate area. Upon further investigation it was found that a hunting preserve, that offered feral swine hunts, had recently closed and all fencing removed. Due to the swift action from responsible landowners and the Ohio Division of Wildlife, Ohio WS was able to remove all 22 feral swine in one trap catch. Continued monitoring efforts indicate the absence of feral swine in the area.

Ontario (Submitted by Erin Koen and Jeremy Downe)

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) is undertaking efforts to learn more about the number and locations of wild pigs in Ontario by collecting sightings from the public. Sightings can be submitted to an email address dedicated to wild pig reporting and/or to an iNaturalist webpage. MNRF also launched a communications campaign, including social media, to solicit sightings and share information.

In 2019, MNRF received 110 unverified reports of wild pigs in Ontario. These unverified reports consist of live wild pigs, dead wild pigs, and wild pig sign, and include both old and recent observations. These sightings are scattered in small pockets across hundreds of kilometers between Windsor to Hawkesbury and north to Timiskaming.

In winter 2020, MNRF launched a wild pig detectability pilot study to investigate locations where sightings indicate there is a high likelihood that wild pigs are present. At these locations, staff are speaking with local residents and setting up baited trail cameras. At the time of writing, preliminary data suggest that most wild pig sightings are isolated escaped domesticated pigs; a small number of sightings appear to be of mixed or pure Eurasian wild boar descent. Based on the sightings received to date, it does not appear that there are any established populations in Ontario.

At this time, hunting wild pigs in Ontario is not recommended. Private landowners have the right to protect their property from wildlife damage, including damage caused by wild pigs. While farming Eurasian wild boar is legal in Ontario, captive hunting preserves for wild boar are not legal in Ontario. Ontario is also exploring regulatory approaches under the Ontario's Invasive Species Act to address the threat of wild pigs in the province.

Legality of Hunting Feral Swine or Wild Pigs by State or Province (survey conducted by J. C. McCoy, OH DNR)

| Status of Legality of hunting feral swine or wild pigs by state or province 2020 based on survey response. (prepared by Clint McCoy, OH DNR) | | |
|---|--|--|
| State | Hunting Status of Feral Swine or Wild Pigs | Comments |
| Illinois | Banned | Allow opportunistic take during deer firearms seasons |
| Indiana | Banned on public land | Landowners discouraged from allowing hunting - prefer WS trapping |
| Iowa | No regulations on feral swine | Interested in what we do, so they may follow suit |
| Kansas | No hunting of feral swine allowed by statute (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2019_20/statute/047_000_0000_chapter/047_018_0000_article/047_018_0009_section/047_018_0009_k/) | Landowners and designated agents of landowners (approved by KDA via permit) can shoot feral swine when found on their property. All feral hog sightings/control must be reported to the KDA. |
| Kentucky | No ban in place at this time | Night shooting prohibited. Currently engaged in very well done media campaign (see examples), with ultimate goal of banning pig hunting. Plan to continue to allow landowners to remove nuisance animals |
| Michigan | | |
| Minnesota | Banned | Any swine taken must be surrendered to DNR within 24 hrs (you can shoot a pig, but you must report it and surrender carcass) |
| Missouri | Banned on public land (2016) | Allow opportunistic take during deer and turkey seasons. Not considered wildlife, so no authority to stop hunting on private land |
| Nebraska | Banned | May have been first state to institute a ban, and now free of any known populations. Can authorize agents (landowners) to kill |
| North Dakota | | |
| Ohio | No ban in place at this time | Only restrictions are no night hunting during deer firearms seasons, and no live transport |
| South Dakota | | |
| Wisconsin | | |
| Manitoba | No ban in place at this time | |

Furbearers

**MIDWEST FURBEARER GROUP
ANNUAL REPORT
May 19, 2020**

MEETING TIME AND PLACE

The 2020 MAFWA Furbearer Workshop was scheduled to be held in Traverse City, Michigan May 18-21, but was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions on work and travel. However, the work group held a remote business meeting on Tuesday, May 19, 2020.

ATTENDANCE

Seventeen furbearer biologists participated in the 2020 business meeting, from 13 Midwest member states (Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin). A complete list of attendees and contact information for state furbearer biologists is available in Appendices 1 and 2.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Forums such as the Midwest Furbearer Workshop provide valuable opportunities for state furbearer biologists to become acquainted with emerging issues and exchange information and ideas related to furbearer research and management. As such, the need for state fish and wildlife agencies to establish/maintain furbearer biologist positions and support travel of furbearer biologists to the annual Midwest Furbearer Workshop is critical to maintaining quality furbearer management and research in each state. It is more important than ever that state agencies are in the forefront of issues related to furbearer management and regulated trapping in order to ensure abundant populations, address important conflicts, and provide sustainable recreational opportunity.

At the 2020 business meeting, we identified a number of topics to discuss ranging from large-scale emerging issues (Covid-19) to individual state regulations and research projects. The following topics were on the agenda and discussed:

- CITES issues related to otter, bobcat and bear
- Collaborative muskrat research status
- Coyotes and artificial light for hunting
- AFWA furbearer harvest database
- Covid-19 and impacts on mustelids, felids, other species
- Bear-wise update

Although the work group enjoyed their discussions and a chance to exchange ideas, we missed the formal presentations on research and management topics, the breaks and evening hours which typically allow much exchange of information on current results from population and harvest surveys, current challenges and issues in furbearer management within each state, and an opportunity to discuss new or proposed research projects. The full workshop provides a good venue for discussing new ideas or issues that affect multiple state agencies. While we were unable to hold the full regular meeting, we were able to discuss a number of important issues and develop some information items. Summaries of these topics are presented below as Director Action or Information Items.

DIRECTOR ACTION ITEMS

None

DIRECTOR INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Covid-19 - Preliminary information primarily from zoos and other captive facilities such as mink farms suggests that mustelids, felids, and possibly canids may be susceptible to Covid-19. Some states have developed handling protocols for research on these species to reduce the risk of human-wildlife transfer. However, much is unknown about the ability of the virus to transfer from humans to wildlife or from wildlife to humans. Even less is known about the potential population level impacts of Covid-19 on furbearing animals. Given the economic and human impacts from Covid-19, the workgroup recognizes that limited funds may be available but encourages funding on research to examine these issues related to Covid-19 and furbearing animals.
2. Support for BMPs Work – The group continues to support the ongoing BMP testing procedures. Recommendations are needed for trap types to test along with varying trap placement and baiting protocol for multiple species. The work group recommends continued support for BMPs at the regional level along with promotion of ongoing research and the need for more public, agency, and trapper outreach.
3. CITES Issues - The USFWS again granted a national no-detriment finding for otter harvest, allowing Midwest (and other) states the ability to continue otter harvest management programs and processing CITES requirements as they have been doing. AFWA is also in the process of submitting materials for a national no-detriment finding on bobcats. Unless significant concerns are found in this process, which is not expected, a no detriment finding for bobcat harvest by the USFWS is expected.
4. Spotted Skunk ESA Review - The Plains subspecies of the eastern spotted skunk 12-month review for potential Endangered Species Act listing by USFWS is set to begin in 2021 with

the listing decision in 2022. Data requests from the USFWS for each impacted state will likely begin in 2021. Listing could seriously impact trapping in Midwestern states.

5. Large Carnivore Report - The group will continue to annually update the Directors on changes in large carnivore management in the Midwest via Appendix 5.
6. Muskrat Declines - The MAFWA Furbearer Group will work continue to seek funding for cooperative research projects to assess causes for the decline of muskrats in the eastern United States with an emphasis on developing management actions to reverse declines where feasible. The MAFWA Furbearer Group believes that there has been a decline in muskrat abundance throughout much of their range in eastern North America over the past several decades.
7. Wolf and Lynx Delisting- USFWS final delisting decisions for lynx and Great Lakes wolves should be released soon although both processes seem to be ‘stalled’ for reasons we do not understand.

The Midwest Furbearer Working Group thanks state Directors for their continued support of travel of state furbearer biologists to the annual Midwest Furbearer Resources Workshop. With tight budgets and restricted travel this annual workshop continues to be a critical component of sound resource management in the Midwest. Annual meetings allow for an open, thorough exchange of information and knowledge resulting in efficient, effective, and sound management of these unique species.

TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources will host the 2021 Midwest Furbearer Workshop. An exact time and location is yet to be determined. A complete list of previous host states is available in Appendix 3.

APPENDICES

| | |
|---|----|
| Appendix 1. 2020 Midwest Furbearer Work Group Attendees..... | 5 |
| Appendix 2. Midwest Furbearer Biologists – Contact Information..... | 7 |
| Appendix 3. Host States of Midwest Furbearer Workshops..... | 13 |
| Appendix 4. Large Carnivore Sub-Committee Status Report..... | 14 |

APPENDIX 1. LIST OF THE ATTENDEES OF THE MIDWEST FURBEARER WORKGROUP VIRTUAL BUSINESS MEETING MAY 19, 2020.

| Last Name | First Name | Affiliation |
|-----------|------------|------------------------------------|
| Albers | Gerriann | Indiana DNR |
| Bump | Adam | Michigan DNR |
| Conlee | Laura | Missouri DOC |
| Dennison | Katie | Ohio DNR |
| Erb | John | Minnesota DNR |
| Etter | Dwayne | Michigan DNR |
| Evelsizer | Vince | Iowa DNR |
| Fisk | Keith | South Dakota |
| McTaggart | Stan | Illinois DNR |
| Palmer | Laura | Kentucky |
| Peek | Matthew | Kansas Dept. of Wildlife |
| Roberts | Nathan | Wisconsin DNR |
| Rosler | Shawn | Wisconsin DNR |
| Sasse | Blake | Arkansas Game & Fish Commission |
| Tack | J.P. | Wisconsin DNR |
| White | Bryant | AFWA |
| Wilson | Sam | Nebraska Game and Parks Commission |

APPENDIX 2. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES FURBEARER WORK GROUP MEMBERS.

Illinois

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North Dakota

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APPENDIX 4. HOST STATES FOR MIDWEST FURBEARER WORKSHOPS, 1979-2020.

| Year | State | Year | State |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1979 | Kansas | 2017 | Iowa |
| 1983 | Wisconsin | 2018 | North Dakota |
| 1984 | Illinois | 2019 | Oklahoma |
| 1985 | Iowa | 2020 | Remote Business Meeting |
| 1987 | Minnesota | | |
| 1988 | Indiana | | |
| 1989 | Missouri | | |
| 1990 | Nebraska | | |
| 1991 | South Dakota | | |
| 1992 | Ohio | | |
| 1993 | Oklahoma | | |
| 1994 | North Dakota | | |
| 1995 | West Virginia | | |
| 1996 | Michigan | | |
| 1997 | Illinois | | |
| 1998 | Kansas | | |
| 1999 | Wisconsin | | |
| 2000 | Missouri | | |
| 2001 | Ohio | | |
| 2002 | Iowa | | |
| 2003 | Minnesota | | |
| 2004 | Illinois | | |
| 2005 | North Dakota | | |
| 2006 | Michigan | | |
| 2007 | Nebraska | | |
| 2008 | Kansas | | |
| 2009 | Kentucky | | |
| 2010 | South Dakota | | |
| 2011 | Wisconsin | | |
| 2012 | Missouri | | |
| 2013 | Illinois | | |
| 2014 | Ohio | | |
| 2015 | Indiana | | |
| 2016 | Minnesota | | |

APPENDIX 5. LARGE CARNIVORE STATUS REPORT FOR MOUNTAIN LIONS, BLACK BEARS, AND WOLVES.

MOUNTAIN LIONS

| | Protected (Y/N)¹ | Estimated population | Harvest (Y/N/NA)² | Recent changes in distribution |
|---------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Illinois | Y | No breeding population | NA | Rare visitor |
| Indiana | Y | 0 | NA | Rare visitor |
| Iowa | N | <5 | NA | Occasional visitor |
| Kansas | Y | 0 | NA | None, still getting infrequent dispersers |
| Kentucky | Y | 0 | NA | |
| Michigan | Y | No breeding population | NA | A few transients each year, 52 confirmed sightings since 2008. All but 1 in Upper Peninsula. |
| Minnesota | Y | No breeding population | NA | Decline in transients apparent from 2014 – 2017 compared to 2010 – 2013, and then recent uptick in confirmations from 2018 - 2020. |
| Missouri | Y | No breeding population | NA | 6-10 transients confirmed each year; 82 confirmations since 1994 |
| Nebraska | Y | No statewide estimate; Pine Ridge Unit: 34 (2019 survey) | Recommended for 2021 | 3 populations formed since mid-2000s |
| North Dakota | Y | None available | Y | No |
| Ohio | N | 0 | NA | |
| South Dakota | Y | Approximately 260 in Black Hills, no statewide estimate | Y | No |
| Wisconsin | Y | No breeding population | NA | Rare transients |

¹Yes indicates the species is protected by state or provincial laws (e.g. listed as a game animal with an open or closed season).

²NA indicates the question is not applicable because no known breeding populations exist with the state or province.

BLACK BEARS

| | Protected (Y/N)¹ | Estimated population | Harvest (Y/N/NA)² | Recent changes in distribution |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Illinois | Y | No breeding population | NA | Rare visitor |
| Indiana | Y | 0 | N | Occasional visitor |
| Iowa | N | <5 | NA | Occasional visitor |
| Kansas | Y | 0 | NA | None, still getting infrequent dispersers |
| Kentucky | Y | 400 in core area | Y | Expanding population |
| Michigan | N | ~12,500 | Y | Stable population in Upper Peninsula (80% of MI bear population), expanding population in Lower Peninsula |
| Minnesota | Y | 12 ~ 15,000 | Y | Decline from late 90's to ~ 2010, slight increase since |
| Missouri | Y | 540-840 | N | Growing and expanding population |
| Nebraska | Y | 0 | NA | Rare visitor |
| North Dakota | Y | No breeding population | N | Regular visitor, with some individual bears overwintering |
| Ohio | Y | 5-10 | N | 50-100 transients confirmed each year (increasing trend); <5 confirmed reproducing females |
| South Dakota | Y | 0 | NA | Rare occurrence |
| Wisconsin | Y | 28,900 | Y | Expanding |

¹Yes indicates the species is protected by state or provincial laws (e.g. listed as a game animal with an open or closed season).

²NA indicates the question is not applicable because no known breeding populations exist with the state or province.

WOLVES

| | Protected (Y/N)¹ | Estimated population | Harvest (Y/N/NA)² | Recent changes in distribution |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Illinois | Y | No breeding population | NA | Rare visitor |
| Indiana | Y | 0 | NA | Rare visitor |
| Iowa | Y | <5 | NA | Occasional visitor |
| Kansas | Y | 0 | NA | None, have only confirmed 2 |
| Kentucky | Y | 0 | NA | N/A |
| Michigan | Y | ~662 (2018) | N | UP fully occupied. Minimum population estimate. |
| Minnesota | Y | ~2700 (in winter 2018-19) | N | Slight expansion, most suitable habitat occupied |
| Missouri | Y | 0 | NA | Occasional visitor, 7 confirmations since 2001 |
| Nebraska | Y | 0 | NA | Rare visitor |
| North Dakota | Y | 0 | NA | Occasional visitor |
| Ohio | N | 0 | NA | |
| South Dakota | Y | 0 | NA | Rare occurrence |

| | | | | |
|------------------|---|---------|---|-----------|
| Wisconsin | Y | 925-952 | N | Expanding |
|------------------|---|---------|---|-----------|

¹Yes indicates the species is protected by state or provincial laws (e.g. listed as a game animal with an open or closed season).

²NA indicates the question is not applicable because no known breeding populations exist with the state or province.
