



“SERVING THE HUNTER WHO TRAVELS”

“Hunting provides the principal incentive and revenue for conservation. Hence it is a force for conservation.”

Special To The Hunting Report World Conservation Force Bulletin

by John J. Jackson, III

□ Taking A Second Look

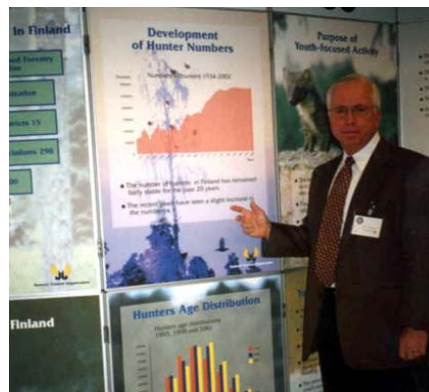
How Many Hunters Are There, Really?

There are three times more hunters in the US than commonly published. Nearly 45 million people in the US have hunted and form part of its support. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) issued a press release in July that quotes the experts. The National Wild Turkey Federation is an appropriate sportsmen’s conservation organization to call these facts to attention. The number of wild turkey hunters in the US has doubled from 1.3 million to 2.6 million since the NWTF was founded in 1973. We repeat the NWTF points here, the quoted experts and add some need-to-know analysis from our own files.

The NWTF press release states that “[m]any people believe that reporting there are 13 million hunters in this country is at least misleading and, at worst, a gross underestimation of their actual numbers.” “That number only represents how many people over the age of 16 hunted during a one year period.... It does not include hunters under the age of 16, nor nor does it

take into account those people who consider themselves hunters but for whatever reason, didn’t hunt in 2001.”

The release quotes Mark Damian Duda, Executive Director of Responsive Management, that “[a]ccording to our research, about 28 million Ameri-



John Jackson at the 50th General Assembly of CIC viewing chart on the growth of hunting in Finland. Conference was in Helsinki.

cans consider themselves hunters, even though they don’t hunt every year and some haven’t gone for several years.” (Emphasis ours.) The NWTF press release also quotes Rob Southwick, presi-

dent of Southwick Associates that “[t]he National Survey shows there are 43.7 million people in the United States who have hunted in any previous year. That number is three times more than the number of people reported as having hunted in 2001. That’s significant.” The NWTF release adds that researchers have “found that many people subscribe to the idea that once a hunter, always a hunter.”

Now for our thoughts. The Survey everyone is citing is the *2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* completed once every five years by the US Census Bureau. First, the 13 million figure can indeed be misleading. When the 1.74 million hunters in the six- to 15-year-old age class are added, the number of hunters is 14.7 million. It is also wholly incorrect to compute hunters in 2001 as a percentage of the US population, as the antis do, unless the six- to 15-year-old age group of hunters is included. One fifth of the total US population was in the six- to 15-year-old age class at the time of the survey.

Certainly, hunters in that age class should be considered as well. That age group is particularly important because of the lifetime impression hunting can make on children that naturally yearn to hunt and experience the greater outdoors. The same is true for the 13.145 million six- to 15-year-olds who fished that year. They remember.

The National Survey does conclude that 43,745,000 persons in the US hunted in 2000 or before. That does not include those who hunted in 2001 for the first time. It only includes those who hunted in 2000 or before. If the previous year's number of first-time hunters was used as an estimate of the number of new hunters in 2001, that adds an additional 1.24 million hunters. When totaled, it raises the number of people who reportedly have hunted by the early Fall of 2001 to 44,985,000. We round off that to 45 million, which it misses by only 15,000.

“The anti-hunters raved when the 2001 National Survey was published, but there was little for them to rave about.”

We must also add that the terrorism of September 11, 2001, did not affect the results of the survey, according to the surveyors. Nevertheless, much of the Survey was conducted in October, the next month. Many hunters we know cancelled hunts and booking agents were complaining. The survey of 2006 should tell.

Readers may recall that Conservation Force and Dallas Safari Club contracted with Mark Damian Duda of Responsive Management and published a brochure on the significant growth of big game hunting in America. It is still true. Though the 2001 National Survey showed no growth in big game hunting, virtually all other activities declined. Big game hunting continues to stand out for that. 91 percent of all hunters hunted big game. It is the most popular kind of hunting, and it has had the highest growth rate of any popular outdoor

activity for more than half a century. One survey showing no growth does not change the long-term trend.

The anti-hunters raved when the 2001 National Survey was published, but there was little for them to rave about. They like to compare America's hunting and fishing to wildlife watching. We do not agree that wildlife watching activities are opposite and opposing poles, as the anti profess. Nor do we agree that hunting and fishing are declining in comparison to wildlife watching. They absolutely are not!

The activities are not opposites. Hunters and anglers pay the largest share of wildlife conservation, which is far more than all others combined. Moreover, hunters and anglers are more likely to be “wildlife watchers” than others in the general public. 62 percent of hunters and 58 percent of anglers participated in wildlife watching in 2001. In fact, 33 percent of wildlife watchers also reported hunting and/or fishing during the year.

But that is not all. Wildlife watching has never been what it is held out to be in popularity, growth or revenue. The number of wildlife watchers declined in every survey before 2001. In 2001, its growth was not enough to offset its decline over the decade. “Participation in wildlife watching (observing, feeding and photographing wildlife) decreased from 76.1 million in 1991 to 62.9 million in 1996 (17 percent), but it increased to 66.1 million from 1996 to 2001 (5 percent),” according to the survey. That is a 10 million decrease over the decade! That was preceded by a similar decrease in participants in both five-year surveys the decade before. Nothing has fared worse than wildlife watching in the past two decades, since 1980. Before 1980, wildlife watching was not surveyed. Overall “the number of wildlife-watching participants who took trips away from home to observe, feed or photograph wildlife decreased 19 percent from 1980 to 2001. The number of people who fed wildlife around their home decreased by 18 percent.” (2001 National Survey Summary of Findings) Wildlife observing and photographing decreased by five percent

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“Serving The Hunter Who Travels”

in 1996 and 13 percent in 2001. The component of wildlife watching that increased in 1996 was residential wildlife watching, while feeding wildlife and visiting parks maintained their 1996 participation levels. Watching wildlife at one's residence is the “pre-eminent type of wildlife watching,” but does little to support America's wildlife conservation system.

The longer trends of hunting and fishing should also not be ignored. From 1955 to 2001, hunting (all kinds) increased 31 percent and big game hunting more than tripled. Angling increased by 130 percent during the same period.

Sportsmen and sportswomen also remain the paradigm because they pay the bills. The perception that wildlife watching is ushering in a new conservation era has proven dead wrong for two decades. Even the *Teaming With Wildlife* campaign of our state agencies would have placed the greatest burden on sportsmen and sportswomen. Some agencies have lost sight of the fact that they are wildlife agencies, not tourist bureaus. They are spending sportsmen's dollars to lure general tourist into the states. Those general tourists contribute little to wildlife conservation and add to management costs. Those added costs are political as well as financial. Their prejudices, biases, and urban beliefs pose problems.

From 1996 to 2001 nonresidential wildlife photography declined 22 percent, nonresidential observing of wildlife declined 12 percent and nonresidential wildlife feeding declined 29

percent. The declines over the full decade from 1991 to 2001 were 30, 34 and 47 percent, respectively. Even visiting public parks and areas in one's own state of residence was down 29 percent from 1991 to 2001.

Still another comparison is insightful. The antis and doomsayers would have you believe that hunting recruitment is too low and that hunters are aging and dieing off. When the survey results were first announced, Heidi Prescott, the National Director of the Fund for Animals, commented in a press



release, “The End of Hunting is in Sight.” She said that “[t]hese are long-term trends, not just a blip in the numbers, and we're delighted to see that more and more people are trading their guns for cameras.... The end of hunting is no more than a generation away.”

The truth is that wildlife watching is far worse off. There are a lower percentage of young wildlife watchers than hunters. Only 13 percent of wildlife watchers are in the 25 to 34 age group while 19 percent of hunters and anglers are in that class.

Wildlife watchers are older. 19 per-

cent of wildlife watchers are 65 years of age, or older, while only seven percent of hunters and eight percent of anglers are in that class. Adding the three age groups (45-54, 55-64 and 65 and over) is really revealing. More than half of wildlife watchers (57 percent) are in the 45 and above age classes. Only 40 percent of hunters and 42 percent of anglers were forty-five and over in 2001. What is even more remarkable is how much older wildlife watchers would be if 62 percent of hunters and 58 percent of anglers were not wildlife watchers, thus lowering the age percentages because of their inclusion. The younger hunters among wildlife watchers make the watchers appear more youthful than they would otherwise be.

That having been said, the antis want to eliminate wildlife watching too. They want to eliminate all dominion and interference with wildlife and animal life. They want to close zoos, circuses, parks and access to land. Their strategy is to divide to vanquish. Perhaps hunters are actually fortunate that wildlife watchers enjoy wildlife too.

Take solace in the fact that there are 45 million people in the US who have hunted and 111 million people who have fished as anglers, which is 115 million when those who fished for the first time in 2001 are included. Nevertheless, hunters and anglers are minorities. No one and no organization will ever change our minority status, yet we are not alone. Minorities are the norm for nearly every activity. We are a big one.

Briefly Noted

Hunters Did That, Too: Hunters have plenty of reason to be proud. Two of those reasons are the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary and the Denali National Park in Alaska. Hunters were the force behind the creation of both.

In the 2003 Winter Issue of *The Alaska Professional Hunter*, Robert Fithian, Executive Director, reminded everyone of the role that hunters played in the creation of both the

McNeil River and Denali Park treasures. Denali National Park (initially Mt. McKinley National Park) was created from the effort of a hunter by the name of Charles Sheldon; his Alaska guide, Harry Karsten; and the Game Committee of the Boone and Crocket Club.

The McNeil River State Game Sanctuary is the greatest bear viewing site in the world. It exists because of

the tireless petitioning of the Alaska Board of Game by Slim Moose. Slim was a well-known Alaskan guide and member of the Alaska Professional Hunter's Association.

Jim Fithian points out that hunters are the true stewards who have lead the way. “We can stand by our contributions to the well being of our wildlife and wild-lands. We have always provided for and carried the economic

burden of management of our wildlife resources. Management that is based on true science applied to proper stewardship conservation principles and mandated by our needs of food, economics and enjoyment. In Alaska, our State Constitution requires that our wildlife be utilized, developed and maintained on the sustained yield principle. It further assures full utilization and development of our fish and wildlife resources.”

CIC 51st Conference: The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, CIC, has scheduled its 51st General Assembly. It is to be in Poiana Brasov, Romania, Tuesday, April 21st through Sunday April 25th. Chrissie Jackson of Conservation Force continues to be the Head of the US Delegation. She is the person to contact if you wish to attend. Email her at: cjackson@conservationforce.org. Or call her at: 504-888-1177. Yours truly is a member of the governing Executive Committee of CIC. I continue to be the President of CIC's Commission on Sustainable Use. Shane Mahoney serves on the Commission on Sustainable Use as a Vice President. I also continue as Vice President of the Tropical Game Commission, which concerns itself with wildlife issues south of the equator. Wouter Van Hoven of the University of Pretoria, famous for his elephant relocation to Angola and giant sable conservation in Angola, serves as President of that Commission.

The 50th General Assembly was held in May in Helsinki, Finland. The King of Spain, H.M. King Juan Carlos I, made the official dedication of the 50th Anniversary for the CIC's General Assembly. His address concerned sustainable use and “two main principles” about sustainable use that he wished to bring to people's attention:

- Animal life and natural resources have cultural, ethical, ecological and economic implications. Attaching an economic value to natural resources will result in an increase of the necessary funds for their conservation and sustainable use.

- Sustainable use sets the basis for the progress of mankind as it fosters the

preservation of biological diversity through the many social, economic benefits that it produces.

The highlight of that meeting was a day-long symposium entitled “Youth of the World for Sustainable Use.” Truly world-class wildlife conservation leaders made the presentations, including Tony Frost, President of World Wildlife Fund, South Africa; and



Ray Lee, President of Foundation for North American Wild Sheep.

The Commission for which I am President, Commission on Sustainable Use (CSU), adopted the following policy statement: “The CSU's very name is synonymous with the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), CITES, Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), etc. These

international bodies continually define, regulate, and implement the sustainable use of wild natural wildlife and plants.

“The CSU is intimately involved with the evolving definition of sustainable use in the regulation of trade under CITES, particularly trade in hunting trophies. We are participating in its development within the IUCN's Sustainable Use Specialist Group. We are tracking its recognition within the CBD. Modern hunting is the epitome of sustainable use, and CIC needs to strategically define, defend and demonstrate it. We are uniquely suited to represent the hunters of the world in international forums and we must.”

Finland and its hunting was also of great interest at the last CIC meeting, particular as regards whitetail deer. In 1934, the Finnish Hunters' Federation imported one buck and four doe from Minnesota. The number has grown. The number shot today is about 21,000 per year. The whitetail deer is a highly valued game animal in Finland for hunting, its venison, skin and trophies. It is a valued exotic, not an invasive species.

Latest on BSE/Mad Cow Disease: On July 11, The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of US Department of Agriculture issued a clarification on the importation of trophies of ruminant cervids from Canada. In effect trophies are importable. That includes the skin, horns, and antlers of game animals. Game meat from ruminants is not importable, but we are still working on that. The skull, antlers, and skins must be clean of meat, of course. Any risk of spreading BSE/Mad Cow disease through importation of game meat is factious. The game animal would have had to contract it from cow meat that has been off the market for five years. Then the game animal would have to itself be fed to unlucky and susceptible livestock in the U.S. The ruminant must be consumed by the livestock because the disease is not contagious or passed from animal to animal from contact. For a complete explanation visit Conservation Force's website, www.conservationforce.org, under Alerts. – *John J. Jackson, III.*

Conservation Force Sponsor

The Hunting Report and Conservation Force would like to thank International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife (IGF) for generously agreeing to pay all of the costs associated with the publishing of this bulletin. IGF was created by Weatherby Award Winner H.I.H Prince Abdorreza of Iran 25 years ago. Initially called The International Foundation for the Conservation of Game, IGF was already promoting sustainable use of wildlife and conservation of biodiversity 15 years before the UN Rio Conference, which brought these matters to widespread public attention. The foundation has agreed to sponsor *Conservation Force Bulletin* in order to help international hunters keep abreast of hunting-related wildlife news. Conservation Force's John J. Jackson, III, is a member of the board of IGF and Bertrand des Clers, its director, is a member of the Board of Directors of Conservation Force.



International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife