



“SERVING THE HUNTER WHO TRAVELS”

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Special To The Hunting Report
World Conservation Force Bulletin

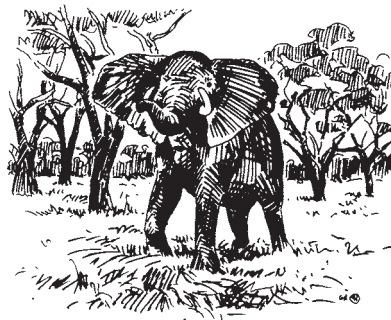
by John J. Jackson, III

African Elephant Downlisted to Vulnerable

The IUCN has downlisted the continental population of African elephant from “endangered” to “vulnerable”. That is the lowest threatened category on the *IUCN Red List*. Elephant remain in one of the three threatened *Red List* categories (critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable) for the technical reason that some of the “major causes for its decline in the past, such as habitat loss due to human population expansion, have not ceased and may not be reversible.” This is an overall continent-wide assessment, not a regional assessment of its status. The “vulnerable” assessment became final at the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in November 2004 attended by both yours truly and Shane Mahoney on behalf of Conservation Force.

The reassessment of the status transpired over the past two years. It was begun in 2002 by the African Elephant Specialist Group (AESG) of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the IUCN (The World Conservation

Union). The African Elephant Specialist Group is one of more than 120 Specialist Groups of the IUCN Species Survival Commission. That Specialist Group is comprised of over 45 select scientists and wildlife conservation practitioners from all over sub-Saharan



Africa. It is by far the most knowledgeable and expert authority on the overall status of the African elephant.

The total estimated African elephant population is 660,000, according to the Specialist Group. The overall population numbers are estimated to be 173,000 greater than in the 1998

Report, yet nearly 45 percent of the estimated range of the elephant continues to have no population estimate. In short, there are more elephants than indicated in the 660,000 estimate.

It is explained in the assessment that “[i]t is not possible to state whether the change in the listing is due to real changes in the status of the species, to the availability of better information and/or to the use of different methods of assessment.” The new assessment considered the up-to-date population figures but not the apparent trend of the continental level published in late 2003, *African Elephant Status Report 2002, An Update from the African Elephant Database*. Although some local trends have been reliably determined, that is not true of the continent as a whole. That *Report* is the latest in a series of reports derived from the *African Elephant Database*, which is the largest and most detailed source of information on the global distribution and abundance of any species whatsoever. “Overall, the population figures...are higher than those re-

ported four years ago,” according to that *Report* prepared by the African Elephant Specialist Group. “This is partly due to reported increases in major savanna elephant populations in countries such as Botswana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, which together harbor the largest known populations in the continent.”

The African Elephant Specialist Group advises that this apparent increase in elephant numbers was not itself the basis of the “vulnerable assessment” because no continental trend can be established. Even though the *African Elephant Database* is the largest and most detailed source of its kind in the world, it is not sufficient by itself. The Specialist Group points out that “most elephant surveys are restricted to protected areas, and it is pre-



cisely to protected areas that elephant flock when their range is compressed by expanding human populations. And a high concentration of elephants in protected areas can give a misleading impression of increasing numbers.” In an IUCN press release, the Group states:

“Many other factors can lead to false impressions. ‘We now have estimates covering a much larger area than we did five years ago – and that alone can go a long way in explaining differences in numbers – but there are still huge gaps in our knowledge,’ says Blanc. *The estimates presented in the AESR only cover just over half of the total area in which elephants may still occur, and repeated assessments of the status of elephant populations in these unsurveyed areas need to be made before an accurate picture of changes in*

elephant numbers over time can emerge.”

The fact that African elephants are still listed in one of the three *Red List* threatened risk categories is because of both the population decline in the past, though “there are no credible estimates for a continental population prior to the late 1970’s”, and because of the increasing human populations leading to high levels of human-elephant conflict and increasing fragmentation of elephant range. “Habitat loss and competition for resources between people and elephants remain amongst the foremost challenges in elephant conservation today,” according to the Specialist Group. This important human-elephant conflict occurs primarily beyond the borders of protected areas where most elephant surveys are conducted and where safari hunting can play a more direct role in elephant conservation.

The new Red Listing reclassification does not rest upon any present threat from legal or illegal trade. It is not because of licensed, regulated hunting, nor poaching, bush meat trade or subsistence harvest. It is the result of illegal trade over a decade ago combined with the continuing and irreversible expansion of civilization. How well the African elephant fares in the future largely depends upon how well we address the human-elephant conflict that animal rightists and protectionists do not want to even acknowledge. That is where programs like CAMPFIRE, CHOBE ENCLAVE Conservation Trust, and the Cullman & Hurt Community Wildlife Project play their vital roles.

Botswana has 143,000 elephants, which is the largest known population in Africa. Elephant numbers are expanding there at a continued rate of about six percent per annum. The elephant range in northern Botswana is expanding westward into areas of the Okavango where elephants had not been seen for many years according to the Specialist Group.

Tanzania is second with an elephant estimate of 130,500. Its highest population is in the Selous Game Reserve, 40,000 (\pm 11,500) and out-



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side, immediately surrounding the Selous, 18,000 (\pm 9,000). The Specialist Group states that Tanzania has “one of the most extensive wildlife monitoring programmes on the continent ... (and) one of the highest proportions of protected area coverage in the world. Twelve national parks, 34 game reserves, and 38 game control areas grant varying degrees of effective protection to 28 percent of the country’s land area.”

Zimbabwe is third with 96,000 elephants. Its elephant population also continues to increase. The largest sub-population is in Hwange National Park, 44,510 (\pm 5,800). Zimbabwe’s second largest population is the Zambezi Valley, 19,000 (\pm 2,500).

The new “vulnerable” assessment can be viewed at <http://www.redlist.org/search/details.php?species=12392>. The most recent *African El-*

ephant Status Report 2002 containing distribution maps and population data separately in each area of each country can be viewed at <http://www.iucn.org/afesq/aed/index.html>. Those booking elephant hunts may wish to view the area they are to hunt. It is free of charge. Hard copies can be purchased through <http://iucn.org/bookstore>. Ask for Occasional Paper No. 29, *African Elephant Status Report 2002*.

Briefly Noted

Potential Kenya Safari Hunting Set Back: Legislation that may have facilitated the reopening of safari hunting in Kenya was vetoed by Kenya President Mwai Kibaki in the last week of December, 2004. The bill amending Kenya’s Wildlife Act was introduced in Kenya’s Parliament and passed all hurdles between its publication in June and its final reading and passage on the 9th of December.

For the best scoop on the Wildlife Act Amendment see the Guest Editorial by Ian Parker, *No Progress In Kenya*, *AFRICAN INDABA*, Vol. 3, Issue No. 1, January 2005. *AFRICAN INDABA* is Conservation Force’s African e-newsletter produced by Conservation Force Board Member Gerhard Damm. It is available free of charge on Conservation Force’s website at www.conservationforce.org; or from Gerhard directly at www.africanindaba.netfirms.com. We advise you to try it. In fact, for a free e-mail subscription of African Indaba that is published six times per year just send an e-mail with the subject line “subscribe African Indaba” and your name and address details to: gerhard@muskwa.co.za. If you are a conservation-minded hunter interested in African game conservation, there is nothing like it.

In *Indaba*, Ian Parker advises in a Guest Editorial that under Kenya’s existing *Wildlife Act* safari hunting and even commercial cropping are already permissible. “They are only banned through the Minister’s and Director’s discretionary powers, which they have the discretion to reverse. No new legislation is needed.” Nevertheless, the

Wildlife Act Amendment was represented by the Antis and the press as a hunting bill, and more speciously, as a bill to authorize safari hunting in Kenya’s national parks! Ian points out that the protectionists’ organizations’ oppositions to the amendment was specious. Also that “[i]n this case animal welfare is the tool for raising funds, but not the organization’s goal.”

Ian reports that the amendment was two-prong. It would have restructured the Kenya Wildlife Service and, second, it would have provided a com-



pensation scheme for those damaged by ten listed big game species. The bill would not have directly authorized safari hunting of mammals or commercial cropping. It would have transferred such discretion to the community and lower level governmental infrastructure.

The Ultimate Pronghorn Book: The definitive book on pronghorn antelope has been published by the Wildlife Management Institute. It is the Bible of Pronghorn that every serious hunter or conservationist of pronghorn must have. It is entitled *PRONGHORN Ecol-*

ogy and Management by Bart W. O’Gara and Jim D. Yoakum. Thirty years in the making, the book contains the most comprehensive and up-to-date information on the behavior, physiology, migration, taxonomy, management, and even hunting pointers of the pronghorn. It is 904 pages long with 850 illustrations, 23 chapters and contributions of 10 other wildlife professionals.

The book is one more contribution to the world made by deceased Conservation Force Board Member Bart O’Gara. He also helped write *PRAIRIE GHOST, Pronghorn and Human Interaction in Early America*, by Richard E. McCabe, Bart W. O’Gara and Henry M. Neeves, also published in 2004 after his death. The *Prairie Ghost* is dedicated to Bart W. O’Gara and Jim D. Yoakum as “the preeminent pronghorn scientist of the twentieth century.” The dedication continues that “[f]ew other individuals or partners have had such a profound and impressive impact on the conservation and management of a North American big game species as have these two wildlife biologists.” Bart died just weeks before both books went to press. The dedication ends with the statement that “[w]e miss his savvy and friendship. And, whether they know it or not, so do pronghorn.” We here at Conservation Force miss him too and are mighty proud that he was a Founding Board member.

Both books are available from University Press of Colorado, 800-627-7377. Web: www.upcolorado.com.

New Designated Ports for Trophy Imports: It is official, the US Fish &

Wildlife Service has finalized the rule adding Houston, Texas; Louisville, Kentucky; and Memphis, Tennessee, as designated ports of entry (69 F.R. 233, December 6, 2004). Designated ports of entry are those through which you can import and export trophies that require permits. The Service received 35 comments in total, all of which favored adding the ports. Conservation Force was one of those commenters. The already existing ports of entry are Anchorage, Alaska; Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Dallas/Forth Worth, Texas; Honolulu, Hawaii; Los Angeles, California; Miami, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; New York, New York; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco, California; and Seattle, Washington.

If you wish to import or export hunting trophies from undesignated ports, you need to apply for a special permit from the USF&WS that costs \$25. There are also “border ports” that are “Customs ports of entry” where most kinds of trophies can be imported and exported. The import or export must be non-commercial, and the trophy cannot be wildlife requiring a permit like injurious wildlife, endangered and threatened wildlife and marine mammals. Those trophies require a permit and therefore must be imported through a “designated port” unless one has applied for and obtained a special exemption. In short, the enumerated “border ports” with Mexico and Canada cannot be used for “permitted” trophies unless you get a special permit to use those physical border ports. For example, you cannot bring a CITES listed desert bighorn taken in Mexico through Nogales, Arizona; or El Paso, Texas. Both are designated for Customs entry “border ports,” but are not “designated ports of entry” unless you get a special permit to use one of those ports.

Whatever the port of entry, hunters importing their trophies must file a Form 3-177 *Declaration*. Failure to file is a very serious offense and is not taken lightly. It must also be remembered that trophy importation by your guide, outfitter or taxidermist is con-

sidered “commercial”. Therefore, he or she must have a special license from the USF&WS to lawfully transport your trophy. I advise against letting your guide or outfitter transport your trophy for you by vehicle through border ports with Canada and Mexico, whether or not he or she is licensed, because technically those Custom ports of entry are not for “commercial” importing. Few, if any, guides or outfitters have commercial import li-



censes, and in too many instances they neglect to file the necessary Declaration form.

Individual Right to Keep and Bear Arms: The US Department of Justice has made available a 93 page *Memorandum Opinion for the Attorney General* fully analyzing and confirming

that the Second Amendment of the US Constitution secures an individual right, not a right of the state. It is entitled, *WHETHER THE SECOND AMENDMENT SECURES AN INDIVIDUAL RIGHT, The Second Amendment secures a right of individuals generally, not a right of states or a right restricted to persons serving in militias*. The internal opinion is addressed to the Attorney General and fully analyzes the private, individual right issue. This furthers the position of the Department first taken when Bush took office.

The Second Amendment of the Constitution provides: “A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.” The memorandum opinion of the Assistant Attorney General explains, “[y]ou (the Attorney General) have asked for the opinion of this Office on one aspect of the right secured by this Second Amendment. Specifically, you have asked us to address the question whether the right secured by the Second Amendment belongs only to the states, only to persons serving in state-organized militia units like the National Guard, or to individuals generally. This memorandum memorializes and expands upon advice that this Office provided to you on this question in 2001.... Most recently, in a 2001 memorandum to US Attorneys, you endorsed the view that the Second Amendment protects a “right of individuals, including those not then actually a member of any militia or engaged in active military service or training, to privately possess and bear their own firearms.... As developed in the analysis below, we conclude that the Second Amendment secures a personal right of individuals, not a collective right that may only be invoked by a state or a quasi-collective right restricted to those persons who serve in organized militia units....” The entire memorandum is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/olc/secondamendment2.htm>. - *John J. Jackson, III*.

Conservation Force Sponsor

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