



“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

□ World Wildlife Fund’s “Life Plus” Project Largest Hunting Development in the World

We’ve just returned from northern Namibia and a four-day tour by World Wildlife Fund of the United States (WWF). What we witnessed is the largest hunting development in the world. It is WWF’s “Life Plus” project that supports the development of what will soon be 80 communal conservancies in wild and pristine areas of Namibia, most of which have not been hunted before. In total, the conservancies are expected to encompass 40 million acres of land before the program is concluded. Approximately one-third of that will be new tourist hunting destinations. It is wild Africa in southern Africa.

Forget the stereotype safari settings of ranch or farm hunting in southern Africa. These new hunting destinations are enormous in size, pristine, wild and amazingly beautiful.

The hunting quotas are being very carefully monitored by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). Where game populations are lacking, MET is re-introducing all the appropriate indigenous game species, including black rhino, cheetah and

black-faced impala. It is getting better and better in the largest program of its kind in the world. It promises to be a natural extension of Conservation Force’s initiatives to save “endangered-listed” black rhino, black-faced impala and cheetah; moreover, WWF is a perfect partner for those efforts. For



example, the cheetah count from survey observations has increased 13 fold in the past five years. The trend in game numbers is reflected in the sightings from 2002 to 2005. Cheetah sightings in the Kunene Communal Conservancies increased from 31 in 2002 to 241 in 2003, to 359 in 2004

and to 604 in 2005. Leopard sightings in that region went from 73 in 2002 to 127 in 2003, to 190 in 2004 and to 381 in 2005. Hyena increased from 51 in 2002 to 565 in 2005. Wild dog went from 4 in 2002 to 45 in 2005. Northwest Namibia now boasts the world’s largest free-roaming population of black rhino, while game in conservancies such as the Nyae Nyae Conservancy had increased six fold by 2005.

WWF’s *LIFE Plus* project is funded by \$34 million dollars in US AID and other donor grants from around the world. It began as “LIFE” which is an acronym for “Living in a finite environment.” At its second point of USAID funding, it was called “LIFE TWO”. Now, in its third stage of funding, it is called “LIFE Plus”. The conservancy program in Namibia is supported by national legislation that gives communities opportunity to benefit from natural resource utilization if they form a conservancy, define its boundaries, adopt a constitution and governance, adopt a wildlife management plan and other requirements (the Natural Conservation Act of 1996). The

local communities are not just beneficiaries; they are participants in the process which in itself gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility. The first four conservancies were legally recognized in 1998. By 2004 there were 31. Today there are 50, and 30 more are expected within the next two years. Today's tally is 50 conservancies covering 118,704 km with 210,000 people. That is 14 percent of the land surface of Namibia and 11.6 percent of the Namibian population. The income in 2006 is expected to be up 25 percent. The diverse community-based natural resource program had created 742 full time and 5,153 part time jobs as of 2005.

Namibia has only approximately 2 million people, yet it is twice the size of Texas. The conservancies are expected to support up to ten percent of the country's total human population.

“The Growth in these conservancies is sufficient reason in itself for Namibia to become one of the foremost hunting destinations in the world”

While that is a significant percent of the overall population, it is not significant when compared to the enormity of 40 million acres. It is largely uninhabited, untouched and, until recently, un-hunted.

This is the 13th year of US AID support to Namibia's Communal Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Programme, yet it is little known in US hunting circles. Unlike CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe, there is no funding provided for public relations and communications. The CAMPFIRE Program in Zimbabwe was allocated nearly two million US Dollars for public outreach. Second, German hunters still dominate the Namibian market, although that is quickly changing. All due respect to our German friends, the secret is out. One hunting operator operating on millions of acres of pristine conservancy land reports having taken 36 elephant bulls weighing more

than 60 pounds per side with a number in the 80- to 90-pound range and two 100-pounders, making his area one of the best elephant hunting destinations in the world today. In 2006, the tusks were 93/66, 73/66, 67/65, 66/62, and 54/50 (Contact: Kai-Uwe Denker, African Hunting Safaris, denkerk@iafrica.com .na). Although yours truly filed the suit that established the US import of elephant trophies from Namibia, the elephant there have been downlisted to Appendix II of CITES so they no longer require a trophy import permit from the USF&WS's International Office, Division of Management Authority.

The growth in these conservancies is sufficient reason in itself for Namibia to become one of the foremost hunting destinations in the world. There are potentially other reasons as well. Whenever Conservation Force is successful with its import permitting initiatives, Namibia and its wild conservancy lands will be a “have-to-go destination” for all US big game hunters. There is no other destination where you can possibly take cheetah, black-faced impala and black rhino, certainly not cheetah and black-faced impala. The remote and largely uninhabited northwest of Namibia is the last stronghold of the black rhino. They are free-roaming and secure because of their growing value to the local people, as are the other wildlife. There are actually too many black rhino. The percentage of bulls is too high, which is reducing their breeding. Two are reported to have recently died while Namibia awaits US approval of black rhino trophy imports. What a waste and shame!

Another shame is the import status of black-faced impala, though we have those import denials on appeal before the USF&WS. In one conservancy where black-faced impala have been re-introduced, their population has increased from 31 to 45, in another from 45 to 100, and still another from 25 to 80. The most startling news is that approximately 1,000 heretofore unknown black-faced impala have been discovered in one of the most northerly conservancies.

One senior wildlife officer in MET expressed concern to me about US im-



JOHN J. JACKSON, III
Conservation Force



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Editor/Writer

John J. Jackson, III

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Don Causey

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Conservation Force
3240 S I-10 W Serv Road
Metairie, LA 70001

Tel. 504-837-1233. Fax 504-837-1145.

www.ConservationForce.org

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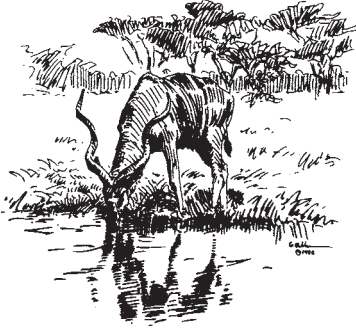
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port practices. He said, “We are reintroducing these species into the conservancies. It is costing time and resources. We might as well be washing them down the drain if the local people don’t value them. If US hunters can’t bring them home, they will not be valued.” In fact, I witnessed a conservancy committee meeting where the members placed cheetah on par with baboon – “eliminate them all” – and were reluctant to devote any of their income and energy to re-introduction of black-faced impala because their US-based hunting operator could not market the cheetah or impala to his clients. Shame, shame on US policy.

Much of the habitat in these conservancies is truly remote, thinly inhabited and wild. Some of it, like the Kaokoveld, used to be “forbidden land,” completely closed to outsiders for more than half a century. Some of the million-plus-acre conservancies have only a few hundred people. The habitat varies from the breathtakingly

beautiful coastal mountains of the northwest to mopane forests.

The most prevalent species are not those at risk: the oryx or gemsbuck, kudu, Hartmann’s mountain zebra, springbuck, duiker, steenbuck, and the



usual assortment of species, including lion and leopard. Where populations are down or nonexistent, they are being re-introduced but only if they are original species there.

One new concept that is being developed is *Premium Hunting*. This is

just beginning to develop, but certainly should have an appeal to some. Though it is tourist hunting, it is the opposite of trophy hunting. In fact, the tourist hunter can’t remove the horns, skin, meat or any part of the animals he takes. The hunter pays a greatly reduced price (discounted), experiences the hunt, native guides, some of the most remote and wildest of habitats on the face of the earth, but most leave everything behind. You can take pictures, make friends and hunt, hunt, hunt and hunt for the thrill of it and those that you will be feeding. It is hunting for others, for management and food, but within strictly prescribed quotas.

Some readers may have reservations about WWF, but we don’t. We’ve worked with WWF in CAMPFIRE since the late 1980’s, as well as in Pakistan. Joseph Cullman of the Cullman & Hurt Community Wildlife Project in Tanzania was one of its founders. The head of the “LIFE Plus” project in Namibia,

Philippe Chardonnet Elected to Conservation Force Board

■ Philippe Chardonnet has been unanimously elected to Conservation Force’s Board of Directors. Philippe replaces Baron Bertrand des Clers who died unexpectedly in October 2006.

Philippe is the Executive Director of the International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife (IGF) in Paris. The IGF is a very active foundation with ongoing projects in 38 African countries. It has projects around the globe from Brazil and Bolivia to Mongolia. It was founded by H.I.H. Prince Abdorezza who was recognized as the “greatest hunter in the world” by Craig Boddington and who received every conceivable award as proof of that fact. Baron Bertrand des Clers was IGF’s Executive Director for decades before Philippe replaced him in 2001. Philippe was groomed by the Prince and Bertrand to head the IGF and it was the expressed wish of both that Philippe replace Bertrand on the Conservation Force Board of Directors whenever Bertrand became unable to serve.

The IGF and Conservation Force

have partnered on projects from Conservation Force’s inception. Bertrand des Clers, its past Executive Director, was a founding member of Conservation Force’s Board of Directors and took an active part in all phases of our development. The IGF funded the monthly printing of the *World Conservation Force Bulletin* until after Prince Abdorezza’s death. Yours truly, John Jackson, has served on IGF’s Board of Directors for nearly a decade. The IGF Board itself voted on whether Philippe should and could serve on Conservation Force’s Board of Directors and approved the continued cooperation.

Philippe is a charming Frenchman with a twinkle in his eyes much like Bertrand des Clers. He is a Ph.D. wildlife veterinarian, has been a licensed Professional Hunter and is as comfortable at darting and collaring giant Lord Derby eland and elephant as he is at releasing black rhino in Namibia’s communal conservancies. He is as comfortable in the field as in the office. He is the co-chair of IUCN’s Antelope Specialist Group and all which

that entails. He authored the *Chardonnet Lion Study*, as it is commonly called (the correct title is *Conservation of the African Lion: Contribution to a Status Survey*, 2002). It remains the most exhaustive study of any large cat in the world and has no equal. Philippe and I together attended both African Lion Workshops in 2005 and 2006 where he provided an invaluable contribution to all.

Philippe was featured this year in *Spotlight on SSC’s Unsung Heroes*, an article in IUCN’s *Species 45: January – June 2006* for his many conservation operations “ranging from wildlife management to rural development in Africa, Asia, South America and the South Pacific.”

Philippe measures up to the uncommon stature of Conservation Force Board Members and has been serving on Conservation Force’s Board of Advisors for several years. This is a marriage made by those now in heaven that were truly great men and wildlife conservationists, H.I.H. Prince Abdorezza and Baron Bertrand des Clers.

Chris Weaver, is a hunter from the US and was bestowed the *Conservationist of the Year* award by the Namibian Professional Hunters' Association in February, 2006. We have explicit faith in this part of WWF and need your continued support to work with them even more than we already do. They can open doors that many in the hunting community can't.

WWF has been courting Conservation Force and Dallas Safari Club to partner with it in the “LIFE Plus” project for some time. We have had closely associated projects and programs for years. For example, Volker Grellmann of Conservation Force's Board of Advisors operates a training center where many conservancy people are schooled in tourist hunting. Philippe Chardonnet has participated in the re-introduction of black rhino and black-faced impala and oversight of parts of the evolving conservation infrastructures. Conservation Force has directly helped create and fund the strategic plan for the re-introductions of key species in the conservancies.

In addition to the policy work, WWF assisted us in implementing aspects of the black-faced impala management plan through strategic captures and translocation of the impala from Etosha to conservancies in north-west Namibia. The list goes on. Now we have agreed to a more direct and formal partnership with WWF in the “LIFE Plus” project.

One part of this agreement obligates Conservation Force and Dallas Safari Club to cover WWF's cost for one of its staffers that is critical to the development and extension of the tourist hunting component of the project. For the next two years, we will wholly fund the “Game Utilization Specialist” on WWF's Technical Staff. The particular individual had a long and respected history with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) before he was recruited for WWF's Technical Staff. We attended an annual quota review and setting meeting with him at one of the conservancies and spent the better part of several days with him and others at the WWF offices. Conservation Force itself needs

support for this. We hope you will help us partner in this important project. Send your tax deductible contributions to Conservation Force at PO Box 278, Metairie, LA 70004.

DATELINE: SOUTH AFRICA

News Analysis

**PHASA AGM:
An On-Site Report**

The Professional Hunters Association of South Africa held its annual General Membership meeting in Drakensburg, South Africa. Stewart Dorrington was re-



elected as president. Gray Thornton of Dallas Safari Club was the keynote speaker at the black tie dinner and auc-

Conservation Force Sponsor

Grand Slam Club/Ovis generously pays all of the costs associated with the publishing of this bulletin. Founded in 1956, Grand Slam Club/Ovis is an organization of hunter/conservationists dedicated to improving wild sheep and goat populations worldwide by contributing to game and wildlife agencies or other non-profit wildlife conservation organizations. GSCO has agreed to sponsor *Conservation Force Bulletin* in order to help international hunters keep abreast of hunting-related wildlife news. For more information, please visit www.wildsheep.org.

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tion. His auction speech led to a record-breaking auction and filled the audience with happy tears. Dallas Safari Club was also recognized for being the largest contributor to PHASA's *Conservation and Empowerment Fund*. PHASA is leading the effort for better Norms and Standards for hunting in South Africa. The 4,100 members of PHASA have long been against canned hunting, mixed breeding, the introduction of non-indigenous game and other practices that are expected to become illegal in March, 2007. PHASA's leadership has been attending workshops around the world with Conservation Force in search of guidance on best hunting practices. They may well become a model to follow.

The South African Wildlife Authorities attended the PHASA meeting and had a positive attitude. Nevertheless, animal rights groups have had their input that may have degraded the safari industry's efforts. Should it be necessary, the Conservation and Empowerment fund is being built up for possible litigation.

Conservation Force works very closely with PHASA which is a full supporting member of Conservation Force. PHASA is the largest professional hunters association in the world. PHASA renewed its supporting membership of Conservation Force during the meeting. It also awarded Gerhard Damm of Conservation Force's Board of Directors its prestigious *Wildlife Utilization Award, 2006* for his extensive work on the proposed Norms and Standards.

Ian Player was the opening speaker. He is well known for having saved the white rhino. His talk about that was quite revealing. Seems he had traveled the United States and copied its park and user-funded conservation system. He spoke highly of hunters and the conservation role they have played both in the United States and South Africa. He had studied Teddy Roosevelt the hunter and had put his teachings to work in South Africa. Ian is widely recognized as a great man and is the older brother of the famous golfer Gary Player. – *John J. Jackson, III.*