



“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

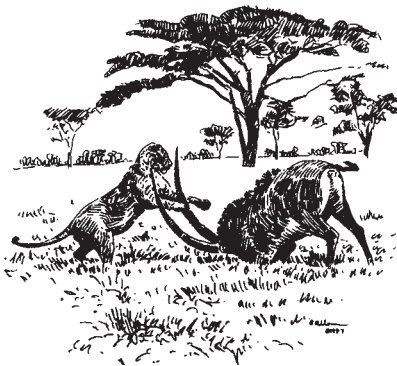
More To Come On African Lion

Although Kenya withdrew its proposal to list African Lion on Appendix 1 at the 13th Conference of the Parties of CITES, Kenya let it be known in its withdrawal statement that it is not finished. Kenya is going to continue to harp in the media and in various workshops and meetings that provide stumps to cry alarm that the lion is “endangered”. Kenya has also promised to restrict lion hunting through future CITES Animal Committee meetings which are held annually between the Conferences.

The Species Survival Network (SSN) that is made up of 71 of the hunting world’s worst enemies is now chaired by the President of the Born Free Foundation. It is thought to have largely engineered the Kenya proposal and the Born Free President is in a position to continue that focus for some time to come. Under his leadership, SSN distributed lion lapel pins and handed out colored marker pens with “Appendix I for African lions” as well as press and lobbying material attack-

ing our *Chardonnay* lion study. They widely misrepresented that an Appendix 1 listing would not stop lion hunting while contradictorily urging in other documents that safari hunting of lion must be stopped!

That said, Kenya and the SSN are



not the greatest threat to lion hunting that we face. When the lion population falls too much, no miracle will save the hunting. Adopting better hunting practices is not enough. Conservation Force is developing a pro-active plan to save the lion and to save the hunting. We assumed most of this re-

sponsibility several years back, but now our course is more resolutely set to do whatever is necessary to prevent the lion of Africa from becoming another tiger. We are working with the top lion experts in the world on a day-to-day basis to fashion solutions. The problem is that lions are incompatible with humans because they eat livestock and really eat people. Hunters can increase the economic viability of lion habitat, help create conservation incentives, tolerance and the revenue needed to fund management programs, but we have to get to it. We need broad support to get the job done.

Craig Packer, Ph.D. is a Distinguished McKnight University Professor famed for his work on the Serengeti Lion Project and recognized as one of the foremost authorities in the world on the African lion. He has been kind enough to permit us to reprint the expert opinion he rendered to the IUCN Cat Specialist Group when the IUCN was preparing its analysis of the Kenya proposal. We provide it here for insight from a real expert, if not the foremost

expert, on what truly threatens African Lion. Professor Packer summarizes in his last paragraph what our commis-

sioned *Chardonnet* Study described in 50 pages in Chapter III, DRIVING FORCES.

Response to the Kenyan Proposal to Reclassify Lions to Appendix 1

by Craig Packer Ph.D.

1.) The Kenyan recommendation is fundamentally flawed since it is impossible to measure long-term changes in lion numbers. The earlier figures were never meant to be taken seriously as population estimates; they were just rough guesses of the order of magnitude of the overall population. Instead of a million lions or ten thousand, the authors suggested that there were probably on the order of a hundred thousand across Africa as a whole. In contrast, the recent estimates stem from the first systematic attempts to tally all the lions on the continent. Crude guesses were made for each reserve or park, and these guesses were summed up to give a crude total. The two most widely cited totals used different techniques – Chardonnet included hunting reserves (Conservation Force’s commissioned study); Bauer and van der Merwe did not – and Chardonnet’s more inclusive estimate provided a larger number.

I was asked to contribute to the Bauer survey, and I made it clear to the authors that my estimates for Tanzania and Kenya were far too crude to be used for policy decisions. Tanzania has

four of the largest lion populations left in Africa (Serengeti, Selous, Moyo-wosi-Kigosi and Rungwa-Kisigo-Ruaha), and I only provided rough numbers for Serengeti and Selous. Further, I made no attempt to estimate the number of lions outside the reserves even though there are numerous reliable reports of man-eating lions in many parts of Tanzania each year. Thus, figures from Tanzania are incomplete, and it is simply wrong to claim that recent surveys show a “dramatic decline” in lion numbers – numbers may well have dropped, but we have a poor idea how many lions live in Africa today, and we’ll never know what happened over the past 20-50 yrs. (Conservation Force – many believe lions in Tanzania have been increasing in number).

2.) The Kenyan report also makes two erroneous claims about the impact of disease on Africa’s lions. Canine distemper virus (CDV) did indeed cause a dramatic short-term decline in our Serengeti study population, but the population completely recovered within four years. (Conservation Force is informed that in one year the

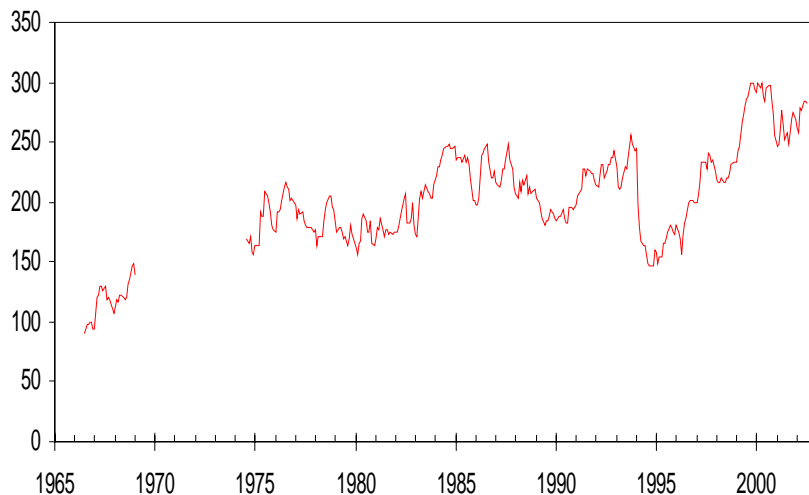


Figure 1. Total size of the Serengeti lion study population. The study population includes less than 10 percent of the total for the Serengeti ecosystem. Gap in chart is a gap in observations for time period.



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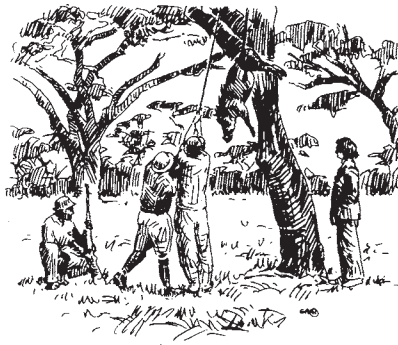
“Serving The Hunter Who Travels”

Serengeti population increased from 2,500 to 3,800) and is currently at its all time high (See Figure 1 on preceding page). There are no data whatsoever showing a measurable impact of FIV infection on lion survival or reproduction. We were the first research group to identify FIV in African lions, and Packer et al. (1999) summarized 15 yrs of data on FIV in the Serengeti lions, finding no difference in survival between animals that were infected at an early age vs. those infected at a later age. This situation is essentially the same as for SIV in numerous primates and FIV in pumas. The consensus among lentivirus experts is that endogenous hosts are unharmed by these viruses: severe immunodeficiency is only a serious health risk to novel hosts such as humans and domestic cats that have only recently been exposed. The only other pathogen besides CDV that appears to be persistently harmful to lions is bovine tuberculosis (bTB). However, bTB has infected the Serengeti lions for at least 20 yrs, prevalence has never been higher than 5 percent and only four animals (out of hundreds) have become seriously ill with the disease.

In contrast to the large outbred Serengeti population, the lions of Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park (HUP) and Ngorongoro Crater are both highly inbred, and both populations are highly susceptible to infection: bTB poses a more serious health risk to the HUP lions than in the Serengeti, and the Crater lions have suffered three major disease outbreaks in the past 10 yrs (1-2 of which were CDV). “Fresh blood” was introduced into HUP in 1999 and a similar translocation will be undertaken in the Crater in early 2005. If disease resistance is improved by the restoration of genetic diversity, it will be important to find the revenue to finance similar activities in other small lion populations. Reclassifying lions to Appendix 1 would be irrelevant to

restoring genetic diversity to small populations in National Parks (e.g. Amboseli, Nairobi, Manyara) and harmful to lions in smaller hunting reserves in southern Africa since there would be little economic incentive for the hunters to manage their inbred lion populations.

3.) The Kenyan recommendation states that quotas set for lion trophy hunters in Tanzania are unsustainable. However, there is no evidence for this assertion. Lion offtake in Tanzania has been nearly constant for the past 10-15 yrs, indicating relatively stable lion population sizes for the country as a whole. Although we do not know how many lions exist throughout the country, the number is very likely to exceed 10,000-15,000 animals, so a to-



tal offtake of around 200 lions is less than 2% of the total.

4.) The most important flaw in the Kenyan recommendation is that it plays down the fact that lions are dangerous animals that kill people and livestock. Rural Africans face real threats from lions, and they retaliate to livestock losses or personal injury by trying to remove the “problem animal.” The number of lions killed by vengeful humans each year is far greater than from any other cause. In the first six months of 2004, one of my students, Bernard Kissui, documented the deaths of 21 lions around Tarangire National Park that were speared after killing livestock. The Tarangire lions

follow the migration during the wet season, and most if not all of the victims originated from within the National Park. Another student, Dennis Ikanda, has found that 6-7 lions are killed by Masai each year in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area; most of the victims had followed the wildebeest migration and originated from Serengeti National Park. The true extent of lion killings from problem animal control (PAC) is unknown since most cases are never reported to wildlife authorities. But extrapolating from Tarangire and the NCA, the number must be far greater than from trophy hunting, and PAC also results in the deaths of adult females as well as males.

The overall reduction in the lion’s geographical range over the past century has resulted almost entirely from PAC. I know of no cases where lions have been extirpated from a hunting reserve, but lions are now missing from large parts of Africa where human populations have increased in rural areas. Reclassifying lions to Appendix 1 will not directly protect lions from PAC. The most likely outcome would be to reduce the tolerance of local communities: any serious reduction in lion trophy hunting would diminish the economic incentives to coexist with lions. Finally, a loss in revenue to trophy hunters would decrease their abilities to invest in any form of protection for the lion populations on their concessions.

Lions are indeed likely to decrease in numbers across Africa over the next few decades, but reclassifying them to Appendix 1 would be a serious mistake. The primary threat to the lion is from PAC rather than from international trade. The most important step that CITES could take would be to guide park managers, wildlife authorities and hunting concessionaires with practical techniques for reducing the impact of PAC.

Briefly Noted

Black Rhino Trophy Imports: Now that there are CITES quotas for black

rhino, which trophies are the most likely to be importable? Irregardless

of CITES, the US Endangered Species Act (ESA) still forbids the importation

of trophies of species listed as “endangered,” unless imports “enhance” the survival of the species “in the wild”. The USF&WS regulations adopted to implement the ESA expressly allow such permits as well. In August 2003, the USF&WS published notice of a long-awaited policy change to begin issuing such trophy imports very selectively on a permit by permit (case by case) basis. The hunting and permit applications must satisfy all existing regulatory requirements, be part of a comprehensive program of the exporting country and be a net benefit to the species “in the wild”. It also must not jeopardize the species.

The implementation of the new proactive practices stalled as the presidential election approached. Politically motivated misrepresentations were flung far and wide in hopes of tarnishing Bush in every way possible. Now that the presidential election is over, the misrepresentations against the Bush Administration should no longer pose a problem. The question remains, what constitutes “enhancement or benefits” to survival of the species “in the wild”? The second question is whether the underlying hunt jeopardizes (no jeopardy determination) the species?

Our view is that the most likely import permit to be approved, if any, is for black rhino taken in Namibia, or in state-protected areas in South Africa. In both cases, the rhinos are government-owned and all proceeds can be dedicated to the conservation of the rhino “in the wild”. Also, no matter where the hunt takes place, if the rhino is a surplus male past the age of reproduction that is also a threat to other reproducing rhino or calves, then “no jeopardy” and “net benefit” findings should follow.

What about the import of trophies of captive-bred, privately-owned rhino? That may present more of a problem. A significant portion of the price must be directed to benefiting black rhino “in the wild” for the program to warrant import. A private owner’s reinvesting proceeds in his captive-bred herd on private land is not likely to be considered “in the wild”

unless the land is unfenced and large enough to be considered “in the wild” which is unlikely with privately-owned rhino.

The number of black rhino in Namibia and South Africa is roughly the same. Namibia has 1,134 of which 859 are on state-protected lands and 275 are on private land or communal lands/conservancies. All are government-owned. Interestingly, black rhino in Namibia outnumber white rhino five



to one. There are 204 white rhino but 1,134 black rhino. It is ironic because white rhino are already importable.

In South Africa there are 1,286 black rhino. Most (1,121) are on government land and 165 are on private or communal land and are privately-owned. In both countries there are a

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International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife

number of populations where the sex ratio is out of balance, *i.e.*, males outnumber females. Nevertheless, the extra males cannot be translocated easily because of the fatal fighting that ensues when they are moved. The CITES quotas of five rhino in each country is less than one-half of one percent (.5) of the populations, which are increasing at a rate of thirty times the rate of the quota offtake. Furthermore, our information at this time is that Namibia is only planning three hunts in 2005.

The bontebok has been the only exception to the practice that the service will not permit imports of trophies listed as “endangered.” Bontebok are captive-bred and privately owned, as are some black rhino in South Africa. The service insists that those permits were approved long ago because the bontebok and/or revenue from bontebok hunting was used to restore and protect bontebok in a state-owned protected area, *i.e.*, “in the wild”. Whatever, it is going to be a harder sell to convince the USF&WS today to issue trophy import permits for privately owned rhino with the owner receiving the proceeds. In short, that means that the ESA likely will prevent the black rhino from following the proven conservation success trail of the white rhino. White rhino exist in more than 100 separate, privately-owned populations in South Africa in large part due to the revenue incentives of the private owners.

The black rhino population in southern Africa is equal to the level of the white rhino when United States hunters played their role in saving them. Fortunately for the white rhino it was never listed as endangered the way black rhino are. It will take an Act of Congress or at least strong administrative will on the part of the USF&WS for black rhino to achieve their conservation value through hunting and achieve the “unendangered” status that is within foreseeable reach. – *John J. Jackson, III.*

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