



“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

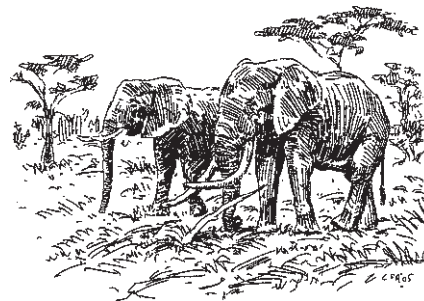
by John J. Jackson, III

What Really Happened at CITES COP14 In The Hague

■ The African elephant range states agreed upon a novel new approach to limited elephant trade, which then passed by consensus of the Parties. Kenya’s attack on black rhino hunting quotas was the center stage for hunting interests. Kenya’s direct attack was soundly defeated after debate and an unmistakable vote. Uganda received its first leopard quota of 28 per annum for its pilot tourist hunting program. Mozambique doubled its leopard quota to 120 per annum (discrete) for its growing safari industry.

This Conference Of The Parties (COP) began with a live presentation and female vocalist caroling Walt Disney’s “Circle of Life.” That was shortly followed by opening presentations by various dignitaries with one highlight for hunters. In his opening presentation, the CITES Secretary General made a separate point of citing the conservation value of trophy hunting. Even Kenya’s request for a 20-year moratorium on ivory trade made exceptions for tourist hunting trophies of elephant in Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa. From the very start a number of draft resolutions and deci-

sions furthered the application of sustainable use and other practical considerations beyond the usual ban on trade. In the student proceedings, the students voted down all of the elephant proposals except one of interest. They voted to permit export of ivory hunting trophies from Botswana. New twists



included a presentation from a Student Conference to the whole body in plenary on the results of their own mock COP. Another was a Ministers Roundtable held in conjunction with the COP. The one loss was the total defeat of the US Fish & Wildlife Service proposal to downlist the bobcat by a vote of 2 to 1.

Elephant Compromise

□ Tanzania withdrew its own downlisting proposal long before the COP began. That spared it the loggerhead fight and participation in the compromise that evolved for the four countries currently listed on Appendix II with annotations: Zimbabwe, Botswana, the Republic of South Africa and Namibia.

A dialogue meeting between the African elephant range states began three days before the COP and continued until the second to last day. Never have there been such marathon negotiations. Kenya, apparently parroting the agenda of International Fund for Animal Welfare, wanted a 20-year moratorium on all ivory trade, except safari trophies. At the other extreme, the Southern African countries wanted annual trade and did not want to come back each COP for new authority.

The day before the COP began, the 56th Standing Committee met and finally approved the one-off sales of ivory provisionally approved at COP12, six years before. That is the sale of a specified sum of registered ivory to the government of Japan

which can't permit its re-export. The protectionists, such as Kenya, tried to add new conditions, but the 27-country-vote EU held the parties to their word. That one-off trade is the second such sale and should be of great relief to those Southern African countries.

The agreement that was reached during this COP permits one more one-off sale of registered, government-owned ivory, which will be the third such sale. There is a catch. Those four countries can't come back for nine years to request additional ivory trade. Kenya dropped its proposed trade moratorium from 20 years to 12, then to nine in the final agreement. This does not stop other countries such as Zambia and Tanzania from making requests, which is surely a possibility since Tanzania may have the largest population of elephant in Africa with growing human-elephant conflict.

Of course, the ivory annotation is not commercial trade. The trade, as in the past, is a single one-off sale only of registered ivory between governments. The “trading-partner” government that purchases the ivory must be “verified,” which is only Japan, though China is seeking verification as well. If there is more than one verified purchasing government, the ivory may sell for a higher price. The one-off sale can only be of government stocks already registered before January 31, 2007 and its origin must be known.

The nine years start running from the date of the one-off sale authorized in the compromise, so it is likely to be 11 years from this date because of the delays involved in transacting such sales. The four countries made it clear that they don't want to come back each COP, and they called for the creation of a new process that would not be so all-consuming for themselves and all Parties of CITES. Although that is an understandable wish, no new process has been devised. Some wonder what would become of CITES without the elephant issue.

The number of elephants in those four countries is increasing at the rate of for to five percent per annum after deducting for poaching/illegal harvest and the approximate one percent natu-

ral mortality. It was a startling compromise for those four countries to make because it effectively locks up that valuable resource when it is so well-managed for the sole purpose of protecting elephant where it is not well-managed. The population may double in those four countries during the interval. In that case, Botswana's 171,000 elephant could become 342,000 and Namibia's 16,000 could become 32,000.

The new annotation for the four countries that are listed on Appendix II has eight numbered provisions. The first expressly permits “1.) Trade in hunting trophies for non-commercial purposes.” This was the first fully accepted provision of the position papers of both those of the Kenya persuasion as well as the sustainable use side from the inception of the negotiations and dialogue meetings. The only change was the inclusion of Zimbabwe that had been excluded by Kenya's side until the very end. This acceptance of trophy elephant hunting is very satisfying to those of us in Conservation Force who had to change the course of our personal lives to establish the importation of those trophies into the United States in the early 1990's in the face of almost impossible odds. We've come a long way since yours truly filed and won the elephant lawsuit to import elephant hunting trophies and also defeated the anti's petition to list the African elephant as “endangered” on the United States' Endangered Species Act. Elephant trophy imports into the United States from those four countries no longer require trophy import permits from the USF&WS. Some in the USF&WS squirm at the thought, and the United States made an intervention objecting to Zimbabwe being included in the compromise.

Two other points were made clear on the sideline to Conservation Force by African delegations during the COP. First, that trophy hunting is a relatively inconsequential use of such a large and growing resource. It does not begin to take the full value of such an abundant resource that is being underutilized and will be underutilized for the next nine or more years.



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Another point that was told to us on the sidelines by an important African leader was that Conservation Force specifically and others within the hunting community are not just NGOs, (non-governmental organizations) - “You are a conservation partner, not just an NGO.” Your intervention should be accorded more weight and respect as a matter of right. (Second sentence is paraphrased.)

Though ivory trade is limited as explained, trade in live animals, hides, hair, leather goods, marked Ekipas in finished jewelry for non-commercial purposes for Namibia and ivory carvings for non-commercial purposes for Zimbabwe, for the four countries is allowed. If conditions warrant, the agreement provides that the Secretariat can propose and the Standing Committee can decide to cease any of the limited trade (including trophies) completely or partially. The agreement provides that the revenue from the raw ivory trade shall be used exclusively for elephant conservation, community conservation and development programs within or adjacent to the elephant range.

As explained above, trophy hunting of elephant was never really at issue. That was not true of the black rhino quotas of five for Namibia and five for South Africa that were established by consensus at COP13. Kenya put those two hunting quotas directly in issue and, we are very happy to report, was rewarded with its worst defeat in history when it insisted upon putting the issue to a vote. Kenya argued dozens of points (Doc. 37.2) and emphatically referred to the black rhino as a “critically endangered” species that should only be hunted if there was no other alternative use of a proven surplus. It ended with an emotional statement that, “It is the call of all rhino in the wild – the call of the wild – so revoke the quota that is null and void.”

The vote was 15 countries (18.75%) in favor of Kenya’s proposal to revoke the quotas, 65 countries (81.25%) against Kenya and 11 countries abstained. The European Union, with 27 votes for 27 countries abstained. Countries that almost always vote against sustainable use voted

against it, including Italy, Israel, Kenya, Algeria, and the New Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United States that had published an “undecided” position voted against Kenya’s proposal, as did Australia, New Zealand, and Germany that frequently vote against use.

Of note, both countries’ white and black rhino populations continue to increase. White rhino numbers are up to an estimated 14,550 and black rhino are up to 3,725. Since 1995, white and black rhino numbers have increased by 92 percent and 55 percent, with annual growth rates of 6.8 percent and 4.5 percent respectively according to the joint document submitted by the IUCN’s African Rhino Specialist Group and TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network. “The lower performance (rate of growth) of black rhino is due



to the effects of increased density-dependence in some of the larger black rhino populations following periods of low levels of removals and in some cases also increases in densities of potentially competing browsers. Increased attention is now being paid to reducing densities of black rhino (and possibly competing browsers) through increased offtakes in an effort to stimulate underlying growth rates in these populations and create additional new populations with the capacity for rapid growth.”

The private sector is playing an increasingly important role in rhino conservation with 27.5 percent of Africa’s rhinos being either privately owned (4,234) or managed for the state on a custodianship basis (797).

Zimbabwe has experienced high poaching levels for horn as well as in-

creased snaring “associated with land resettlement in some areas.” Nevertheless, Zimbabwe’s rhino population has not yet declined because of the rapid breeding having largely made up for the increased losses due to poaching and snaring in that country.

The IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group reports that “because conditions for the equitable allocation of hunting concessions are not in place, Namibia has put a moratorium on the granting of all hunting concessions, including black rhino trophy hunting. As a result, no black rhinos have been hunted in Namibia.” It has been decided that “all revenue from male black rhino hunting is to be reinvested in conservation through Namibia’s Game Products Trust Fund.”

In 2005 and 2006, South Africa hunted a total of six black rhinos out of a possible ten. In each case the rhino had at one time been identified by State conservation agencies as needing to be removed from a breeding population to further conservation management objectives. Of the six hunted, two were old males hunted in-situ in a state-run park (Pilansberg National Park), one was an old lone male on a community-owned reserve and three were hunted on reserves owned by the private sector. Reasons given for one application was that the proposed older male was a behaviorally dominant bull in a small privately-owned breeding population that had not sired a calf for two-and-a-half years. Within 18 months of this bull being removed, the cows began breeding and seven of the eight adult females have produced a total of eight calves since his removal.

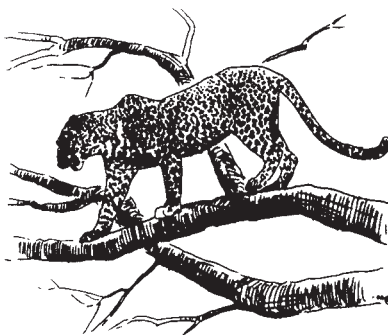
To date, black rhino hunting in RSA has generated approximately \$870,500 (US), averaging \$145,083 per rhino with a range of \$95,500 to \$230,000. The IUCN also reports that “the current inability of American hunters to import black rhino hunting trophies into the United States of America is likely to limit demand,” to which we add, it is likely to reduce the price/value of this resource. RSA’s black rhino population over those two years has increased 7.4 percent.

The Rhino Specialist Group points out that “since sport hunting of white rhino resumed in South Africa in 1968 (when there were only 1,800 southern white rhino), numbers in the country have increased by over 650 percent.” “Both live sales of surplus animals (primarily domestic) and continued limited sport hunting have generated significant additional revenue for conservation in South Africa, as well as helping stimulate an internal market for white rhinos, which in turn has resulted in more land becoming available for the species.” Note that the white rhino population was far lower than the black rhino population currently is when white rhino hunting began.

Leopard Quotas

□ Uganda had proposed the downlisting of its leopard to expand its pilot tourist safari hunting program and asked for a quota of 50. Virtually no one supported “downlisting” any leopard population, so Uganda smartly amended the proposal to be a simple request for a hunting quota of 28 with its leopard remaining on Appendix I. It passed by consensus without the necessity of a vote. The 27-block-vote EU supported it with a floor statement that the quota was “calculated in a conservative way.” Namibia supported it because the biggest threat to the leopard is human and livestock conflicts. The hunting would increase the incentive and tolerance and those leopards would likely be killed anyway. Zambia intervened on behalf of the 14 SADAC Countries with the statement that the quota was a better use of leopard that were likely to be killed anyway. Zimbabwe said the quota was conservative and the methodology of its determination was consistent with that customarily used for leopard. Only Israel spoke against it. Though the USF&WS “opposed” the quota in its Federal Register notice of positions the Friday before the COP, they were persuaded not to oppose it and made no statement. It is well documented that game populations are increasing in Uganda’s pilot hunting programs and now exceed population levels in parks. Leopards should likewise increase with the prey increase.

Mozambique’s leopard quota was increased from 60 to 120 to keep pace with its growing safari industry and to increase revenue to its local people. Germany, on behalf of the 27 EU countries, supported the request and made the statement that it was calculated conservatively. Israel again wished to reject it. RSA said the increase would contribute to conservation and cause economic spinoff to development. Zimbabwe said the methodology was



very conservative. The US published opposition to the quota, but was persuaded not to object before it came up. The quota was accepted by consensus. Later, in a meeting Conservation Force was able to arrange, the USF&WS told the Mozambique authorities that it would require more data and would send a questionnaire to the Director by e-mail. Conservation Force also volunteered to send some data that we

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have about Mozambique.

The USF&WS does not accept quotas set by CITES, although COP quotas were devised because of the United States. It will also not accept non-detriment determinations made by exporting countries though there is a resolution that is also not accepted by the United States. If anyone has trouble obtaining a permit for either Uganda or Mozambique, Conservation Force will assist them until such permits are readily issued.

Antelope

□ Algeria’s proposals to list slender-horned gazelle and Cuvier’s gazelle on Appendix I both passed, though the latter did not pass till plenary. No loss for US hunters who can’t import them because of their ESA listing and little loss to other hunters because generally only the USF&WS embargoes hunting trophies of Appendix I species.

Climate Change

□ The antis’ Species Survival Network (SSN) held a luncheon presentation on *CITES and Climate Change*. They passed a draft resolution and a draft decision that no doubt will be introduced at the next COP in 2010. It maintains that climate change needs to be factored into all nondetriment findings and all harvest levels need to be precautiously limited to allow for the unpredictable possible effects of global warming. Their agenda is to make potential climate change impacts part of every nondetriment determination. WWF joined with them with a publication stating that “all non-climate-related stresses” should be “limited” because “climate change is expected to have a synergistic effect” and “non-climate stresses are often more locally controllable than climate change...” More to come of this at COP15 in Dakar in 2010.

Team

□ A special thanks is owed to the International Professional Hunters Association, the International Council for Game and Wildlife Management and FACE for teaming with Conservation Force at this important conference. We coordinated every morning at breakfast and divided the responsibilities to cover all bases. – *John J. Jackson, III.*