



“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

□ Question and Answer

An Interview With José Luis Mendez-Arocha

Past Director, Profauna (Wildlife Department of Venezuela)

While attending the 14th CITES Animal Committee in Venezuela, I had the opportunity to visit with the immediate Past Director of Profauna, the Venezuela wildlife department. What follows is a recorded interview on May 29, 1998, regarding the prospects of international deer hunting and some scoop on jaguar. If any readers wish to invest in a deer operation, José Luis Mendez-Arocha can be reached by phone in Caracas at 011-58-2-693-4297 - from the US.

John J. Jackson, III (Jackson): I understand you're no longer the Director of Profauna. Can you tell us what Profauna is and how long you were the Director?

José Luis Mendez-Arocha (Mendez): Profauna is the Fish and Wildlife Service of Venezuela. I was the Director General for seven years, ending last December.

Jackson: I first became acquainted

with you about four years ago, when I was working to import jaguar into the United States. Were you the gentleman who was responsible for trying to get a jaguar quota for Venezuela?

Mendez: Yes. We started the program



by inviting safari hunters from the US to come to Venezuela to dart cattle-killing, problem jaguars. After that, we thought of having a permit from CITES to export hunting trophies of problem jaguars.

Jackson: I understand you're now trying to start up deer hunting for international hunters in Venezuela. What can you tell us about that?

Mendez: In Venezuela, the conservation of whitetail deer depends on private land and we have several ranches in Venezuela that are very well stocked with deer. So now the idea is to start a program, which can be very important and successful.

Jackson: I understand that tourist hunters, or hunters from out of the country, can hunt and export their deer, but the ranch has to be registered. Please explain that.

Mendez: The ranch has to request a permit from Profauna and Profauna will make an estimation census of the deer population and give the permit if it's okay. Once approved, there will be no problem with the export process according to the laws of the country.

Jackson: Are there any ranches registered at this time where a hunter from

the United States or Europe can go hunt and take his trophy home?

Mendez: Not yet. We have registered no one.

Jackson: But the law does permit a ranch to register, to be in the program?

Mendez: Yes. The point is that tourist hunting grounds are not traditional. It is something completely innovative in Venezuela, so that the ranchers, by not knowing the idea, are reluctant. They don't want to start because they don't know what's happening in other countries.

Jackson: Do you have any properties or any ranches at this time that would be ideal for the development of tourist deer hunting in Venezuela?

Mendez: There are many that are well stocked with deer. I know of at least 10 in the Orinoco Plains, which have very good habitat for whitetail deer.

Jackson: If a foreign investor or anyone else were interested in obtaining a ranch or registering their ranch so that tourist hunters could hunt in Venezuela, who would they contact or how would they go about it?

Mendez: The contact should be with Profauna, the Fish and Wildlife Service of Venezuela.

Jackson: Would you also be willing to assist anyone who wants to establish a registered ranch?

Mendez: Oh, yes, definitely. Although I am retired, I want to keep working on wildlife conservation. I am also an adviser to Profauna so I can help anyone wanting to get into the program.

Jackson: I understand it's actually been a long-term objective of yours to establish tourist hunting of deer in Venezuela.

Mendez: Yes.

Jackson: I understand there's one particular ranch you know of with a high density of deer that is available to hunt at this time. Is that correct?

Mendez: I know a ranch that is only three or four hours from Caracas by good road. We have counted the deer twice. It has 1,700 deer on it, which is roughly 17 animals per square kilometer (approximately equal to 44 animals per square mile). Ranches like that can be purchased for \$75 to \$150 (US) per acre.

Jackson: What is the body size of these deer? How much do they weigh?

Mendez: A good buck in that particular region could go to 70 kilos, or roughly 150 pounds. That would be a very good trophy for Venezuela. Also, some rare mountain deer that are found in the Andes can be even bigger, but their population remains too small to be hunted in the near future.

Jackson: Are these mountain deer whitetails?

Mendez: The specific name is the same as the one in the United States and in Canada, but it is a different subspecies.

Jackson: How many points would a full grown deer have?

Mendez: A typical one has 10 points, but they sometimes have 12 or 14.

Jackson: I understand the deer in each of the South American coun-



tries vary from area to area. How are the deer different in Venezuela than, let's say, in Costa Rica or one of the other countries?

Mendez: Venezuelan deer lack a gland, which is an important characteristic to make them different. Besides that, the habitat is open, thus they have bigger, wider antlers, and they differ in color and are large in weight.

Jackson: What are the racks like on Venezuelan deer? Are they wider or narrower than the racks on deer in surrounding countries?

Mendez: The deer in the Orinoco Plains have very nice, wide antlers.

Jackson: Is the deer hunting area in the Orinoco Plains Amazonian?

Mendez: No. This area is north of the river. The Amazon region starts a few kilometers south of Orinoco.

Jackson: Would a deer hunter who

JOHN J. JACKSON, III
Conservation Force



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goes to Venezuela to hunt deer experience the rich diversity of wildlife you have, including the birds?

Mendez: Yes, the experience of the tropical region for a person coming from a different country is amazing. Everyone loves the experience, the vegetation, the landscape, the wildlife and the birds.

Jackson: How long is the flight from Miami to Venezuela?

Mendez: A direct flight from Miami to Caracas takes just over three hours.

Jackson: Would it be fair to say it's easier for someone on the east coast of the United States to hunt in Venezuela than in Mexico?

Mendez: That's right - or to hunt in Colorado or Oregon or California. We are much closer.

Jackson: I think we've covered the deer very well. Let's turn back to something I'm sure will be of interest to readers, the jaguar situation in Venezuela. Would the establishment of a hunting program for jaguar serve this animal's conservation interests?

Mendez: Very definitely. At this point most jaguars being killed in Venezuela every year are killed by cattle ranchers because they don't want to have jaguars on their land. And most jaguar habitat in the Orinoco Plains is on private land, so if we don't get the ranchers to collaborate on saving the jaguar, the plight of this animal is very grim. On the other hand, if we give compensation to cattle ranchers for allowing hunters to hunt jaguars it will help greatly in the conservation of this animal. Right now, the attitude of the ranchers is - if the government is interested in jaguars, put them in national parks or somewhere else, not on their land. More than 90 percent of the jaguar habitat in the Orinoco Plains is private. The other land south of Orinoco which we have is virgin jungle on the order of 250,000 square kilometers (almost 100,000 square miles). It's federal government land. The jungle jaguar is smaller than the Plains jaguar.

Jackson: So the continued existence of the Plains jaguar, the large jaguar, is dependent on private landowners?

Mendez: Yes, that's why the idea of

using sport hunters to control problem jaguars is excellent. The fees hunters pay will go in part to ranch owners.

Jackson: It's your position, then, that jaguars are being harvested anyway in Venezuela by landowners protecting their cattle? Sport hunting is just a better use of the jaguar....

Mendez: Yes, but not only that. Sport hunting will mean that the only jaguars that are going to be killed are problem jaguars, the cattle-killing jaguars on the Plains that would be killed anyway. In more than 90 percent of the cases, jungle jaguars will not be killed. That is the situation today. That is absolutely very important.

Jackson: I take it that the shooting of some jaguar in a controlled program on ranches wouldn't affect the protected jaguar at all. I understand that thanks to CITES, the jaguar has



benefited.

Mendez: I am completely sure of that because before, let's say 30 years ago, the commerce in jaguar skins was everywhere and the jaguar population was suffering from it. Since CITES was implemented in Venezuela, we can see the response of the jaguar population. The population is widely distributed throughout the country and can be safely harvested on Plains ranches.

SPECIAL REPORT

News Analysis

Hunting Computer Games Top Sellers

It is heartening to discover that a hunting computer game called *Deer Hunter* was the number one top

seller for months and has sold more than one million copies in this country. In fact, *Deer Hunter* and *Rocky Mountain Trophy Hunter* are both on the Top Ten Bestseller Chart. These computer games are available for only \$19.95 at WalMart. The sales are a testament to the strength of hunting simulation games. Now there is a *Deer Hunter's Extended Season* CD-ROM that adds to the thrill of the hunt with twice as many deer, three new locations, the use of a black powder muzzleloader weapon and options to allow gamers to create their own hunting locations. Further expanding its *Deer Hunter* collection, WizardWorks is introducing the *Deer Hunter Companion* strategy guide, an add-on for *Deer Hunter* and *Deer Hunter's Extended Season*. Priced at \$9.99, *Deer Hunter Companion* is a combination PC game add-on and print strategy guide that gives gamers more tricks of the trade, hunting strategies for tracking deer and five new hunting areas. The second CD-ROM, *Rocky Mountain Trophy Hunter*, gives gamers the thrill of the hunt from the rugged terrain of the Rocky Mountains while trying to track down such big game animals as elk, bear, moose and bighorn sheep. In a realistic recreation, while trudging through the Rockies in search of big game animals, computer gamers encounter unexpected climate changes and the extreme weather conditions of snow, rain, thunder and lightning. Other features of the game include ultra-realistic wounded animal tracking; life-like animal movements and behavior; four big game animals to hunt (bighorn sheep, bear, elk and moose); five weapons (shotgun, rifle, compound bow, muzzleloader and six-shot revolver); tracking aids such as aerial maps with hot spot markers, compass, wind indicator, blood trails, paths, bedding areas, tracks, rubbings and droppings; and tools of the trade such as tree stand, animal calls, bear bait, cover scents, attractant scents, spotting scope and binoculars. A portion of the sales is donated to Wildlife Forever. Anti-hunters have letter campaigns to get them out of the stores.

Briefly Noted

Bison Hunting Again At Issue: An environmental impact statement has been drafted for management of Montana and Yellowstone National Park bison. The draft plan has seven alternative strategies open to public comment until October 16 (120 days total). Three of the seven alternatives would allow various degrees of sport hunting. Option 3 would permit the most sport hunting. The options that include recreational hunting also provide for facilities to quarantine and then clear some bison for relocations. This past winter 1,084 bison were killed in control activities and others died due to starvation. Thus the total population is down to 2,000, but will build up to 2,700 to 3,500 depending on which plan is chosen. Sport hunting Option 3 would allow a full 3,500 bison. The plan can be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.nps.gov/planning/current.htm>. Comments are due by October 16 to Sarah Bransom, IBMP, DSC-RP, PO Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225-0287. The plan as usual contains some interesting facts. There is no cure for the brucellosis that the bison originally caught from cattle. Proper handling and cooking completely kills the bacteria. Bison meat sells for nearly twice the cost of beef because it is considered health food.

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CITES Uplistings: The 11th Conference of the Parties of CITES is more than a year away, but preliminary steps are being taken that leave no doubt what specific game animals are to be on the agenda. The Asian Wild Cattle Specialist Group of IUCN hopes to convince a range nation to introduce a proposal to list the world's population of banteng and wild Asian buffalo on Appendix I. Various protectionist organizations have already proposed listing or uplisting all bears (an annotation to prohibit all trade in viscera, but expressly allowing trophies); transferring African elephant of Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe back to Appendix I; transferring musk deer from Appendix II to Appendix I; transferring all urial to Appendix I;

and uplisting of saiga antelope to Appendix I. These proposals have been formally made to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which in turn carries the message to the world.

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New Nunavut Sport Hunting Guide: Nunavut is the new territory that replaces the former eastern region of the Northwest Territories, the area representing Arctic Canada. To us, it is the land of the polar bear. Nunavut means “our land” in the Inuit language. Inuits themselves used to be called “Eskimos,” but it is an uncomplimentary term meaning “raw meat eaters.” Though the transfer does not take place until 1999, the Inuits fully embrace sport hunting. They have published a Sport Hunting Guide that is free along with other tourism literature such as *Arctic Traveler*. You can get these materials by writing Nunavut Tourism, PO Box 1450, Iqaluit, NWT X0A 0H0, Canada. Tel. 800-491-7910. Fax 867-979-1261.

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Grizzly Bear Hunting in British Columbia: There is a new campaign by the anti's to ban grizzly bear hunting in British Columbia. It is groundless because the BC bear population

is flourishing. The grizzly population has grown from 8,000 in 1978 to an estimated 10,000 to 13,000 today. Only 212 bears were taken by hunters in 1997. Another 50 had to be taken by Conservation officers in control operations. Thus one out of five bears are killed at public expense. One study, the Flathead Grizzly study, has been ongoing since 1978 when the grizzly population in that area was 95. Today the study area is at capacity with approximately 170 bears. The net grizzly population growth rate has been eight percent per annum. Evidence also suggests that forest-harvesting activity can actually increase the bear population. The grizzly growth rate is so great that it is dangerous to work in some areas. The Workers' Compensation Board staff in the northeast part of the province reports a 50 percent increase in bear encounters over the past five years. If you want to help protect bear hunting, then send contributions to the BC Wildlife Federation, Suite 303, 19292 - 60th Avenue, Surrey, BC V3S 8E5, Canada. This organization represents 147 affiliated fish and game clubs and over 35,000 members and is a supporter of Conservation Force.

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Are Hunters To Pay For Anti-Hunting Propaganda? For the second time, an anti-hunting organization has applied to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for a grant under the Pittman-Robertson Act to fund an educational program against hunting for young people. Needless to say, what they want to teach the children with sportsmen's dollars would send shivers up your spine. They want to teach the children that “wild animals... are...sentient creatures who are entitled to ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’ according to their own natures....” A similar grant request was denied last year but we at Conservation Force have a greater concern. Will this type of request be granted under Teaming with Wildlife or other “primarily” non-game funding programs? - *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 20 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

"Serving The Hunter Who Travels"

MEMO

July 24, 1998

To: Jim Young, Print N Mail
From: Elaina Panozzo, Oxpecker Enterprises
Re: August 1998 Issue of Conservation Force Supplement

Jim,

Here's the file for the August 1998 issue of the Conservation Force Supplement, to be inserted in the August 1998 issue of The Hunting Report. Do not forget to insert John Jackson's picture on page 2. Please fax "blue lines" for approval ASAP.

Total print tun is 4,150. That includes 3,928 copies for insertion into The Hunting Report (active circulation); and 50 copies to be shipped directly to Jackson. The remaining 172 copies are to be shipped to us here in Miami. As usual, bill John Jackson for all costs relating to Conservation Force.

Please call if questions -
Elaina