



“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

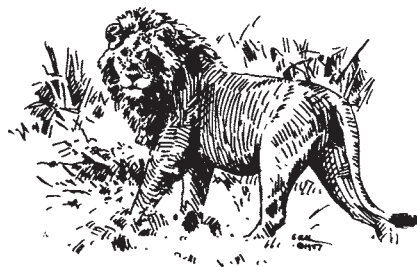
What Really Happened At COP13

This 13th Conference of the Parties of CITES (COP) presented the greatest threat to African safari hunters since the African elephant was listed on Appendix 1 in 1989. That threat was Kenya’s proposal to list all of Africa’s lions on Appendix 1, or alternatively to list those in western and central Africa. The Kenya proposal followed two years of alarming press releases published around the world with claims that the lion had suddenly been discovered by experts to have precipitously declined and was believed to be “endangered”.

Fortunately, Conservation Force and its partners were ready for Kenya. We had already begun preparing or it would have been too late. Before it was over, the Kenya proposal was almost dead-on-arrival at the COP. All that remained was its COP funeral. What follows is a brief look at what was behind that and other successes.

Conservation Force has long been involved in the conservation of the African lion. Consequently, we were

alerted early in 2001 that some anti-hunting interests were shopping for a Party to propose lion uplisting. Conservation Force and International Game Foundation (IGF) (with the proud approval of its President, HIH Prince Abdorezza) assessed the threat and



began defensive measures. We took the high road by engaging Philippe Chardonnet of IGF to travel across Africa and engage more than 40 lion authorities to produce the most comprehensive status review of the lion ever undertaken. The *Chardonnet Study* is unequalled in lion conservation history.

Kenya had to wholly ignore it in its proposal (as South Africa’s early opposition pointed out). Kenya simply could not overcome it.

Before COP 13, we pushed the *Chardonnet Study* to the forefront with the skilled assistance of our film partner, The Osprey Filming Company. Osprey created *The Fate of the African Lion* in record time. The film utterly repudiates the facts and figures in the Kenya proposal with its comparisons taken from the *Chardonnet Study*. It also presents well the value-adding importance of safari hunting. Together, Osprey Filming and Conservation Force distributed nearly a thousand videocassette and DVD copies of the film to all African and European CITES authorities and others. By the time of the COP in Bangkok, some of the most respected cat scientists were stating that the *Chardonnet Study* was the most comprehensive study ever completed of any large wild cat, including the tiger.

The Third Chapter of the *Chardonnet Study* entitled *DRIVING*

FORCES is the most important. Those 50 pages describe the real threats to the lion and make the book far more than a mere survey. It makes it a “contribution to the status of the lion,” as it is subtitled.

In the final months before the COP, we consulted with dozens of lion and management specialists, initiated lion projects far into the future across the entire continent and left no stone unturned to save lions and the hunting of them. This included holding a special meeting in Paris during the International Game Ranching Symposium hosted by IGF that then issued a Resolution against the Kenya proposal that was appropriately circulated. Thanks is due to Rolf Baldus of the GTZ Wildlife Programme in Tanzania, who suggested the Resolution and who also has provided extremely useful lion conflict and PAC information. That Resolution and a number of other information sheets were posted and mailed widely to educate delegates about the downsides of an Appendix 1 listing even with quotas, which few understand and Kenya and the Species Survival Network were deceptively misrepresenting.

Our efforts included sending scientific opinion letters to IUCN authorities under contract to analyze proposals for the CITES Secretariat and Parties. Chardonnet and Conservation Force Board member Bertrand des Clers’ opinions were actually among those solicited by the IUCN because of their recognized expertise and uncommon leadership in lion conservation.

Philippe Chardonnet, now the Executive Director of IGF, made a worldwind tour of west and central African countries just weeks before the COP. He actually persuaded key countries to reopen their lion hunting where it had been closed too hastily for two years. It is very important that we continue to give value to lions, particularly where their habitat is shrinking (as in west Africa), and where they have no possible value other than as hunting trophies. Upon arriving in west Africa, Philippe Chardonnet found that the authorities did not yet appreciate

that an Appendix 1 listing would probably eliminate safari hunting as a tool to save their lions because it would trigger the need for an import permit, which American hunters would not be able to obtain right away, if ever. His trip proved to be a critical one in the effort to save west and central Africa from compromises when deal making started at the COP.

Most of our strategy and defenses were first sounded out with key members of the African Lion Working Group, ALWG. Philippe Chardonnet himself was invited and accepted membership in the exclusive African Lion Working Group of IUCN/SSC. I was honored to receive my own membership to the Group of lion specialists to better be able to further lion conservation now and in the future. We have invested ourselves in facing the Chapter III *Driving Forces* challenges ahead to ensure that hunters are part of the solution and perceived as such.

Upon arrival at the COP in Bangkok, we were ready for the fight without compromising any of Africa’s lions. We also wanted to use the Kenya fight as a stump to proactively improve the public understanding of hunters. Conservation Force went fully prepared to portray licensed, regulated hunting as a tool of conservation. For that purpose, we had a booth that was in striking contrast to all others, because it was the only booth portraying the conservation role of hunting. The booth had a giant booth-size poster depicting hunters as the largest contributors to conservation of all wildlife in America. The poster also showed the increase in game numbers with pictures of each animal. The entire back wall was literally a blow-up of Conservation Force’s “America’s Abundant Wildlife” poster. Each side wall contained different quotes from Aldo Leopold and President Theodore Roosevelt that presented hunting in the very best light by crediting hunters and hunting as the true underlying basis of successful wildlife and habitat conservation worldwide. It was a great attraction to the press and of great interest and educational value to many delegates. It was documented proof of the role of



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hunting as a force for conservation and it worked.

The Osprey Filming Company lion video, with its delightful music, played in continuous loop in the booth. None of the Antis had anything that compared. Chrissie Jackson manned the booth, handed out literature selectively and made appointments for other members of the Conservation Force team continuously with the delegates and Press. Each morning, Chrissie also delivered information packets demonstrating the positive role of hunting to the Pressroom tables. The packets were colorful brochures open to interesting points, such as a Conservation Force brochure page showing the 26 schools built in the Cullman & Hurt Community Project and other sheets with photographs of the veterinary clinic wholly-funded and built by hunters in Ethiopia. The example documents were stapled together in bundles as handouts.

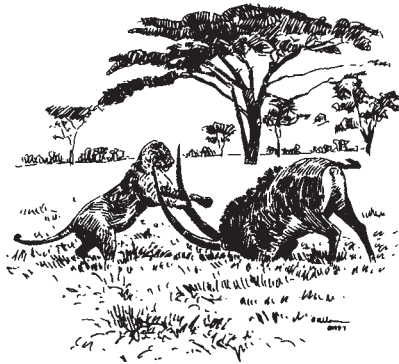
From the first day, we were being interviewed and able to tell the hunters point of view on every hunting issue that arose. It all brought to focus the theme of the Conservation Force booth and the direction that CITES is slowly moving: “We have come to appreciate that it is necessary to positively produce as well as to negatively protect wildlife if we are to successfully conserve it,” Aldo Leopold.

In contrast, the more than 80 animal protection organizations present or that were represented by the SSN (includes Humane Society of the US, Fund for Animals, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Animal Protection Institute, etc.) passed out lion pins and also marker pens with “Appendix 1 for African Lion” on them. Interestingly, the new chair of the Species Survival Network at this meeting happened to also be the President of the Born Free Foundation. That Foundation is reported to have been funding Peiter Kat in Botswana, who was supportive of the lion closure there when it occurred and who also made incredulous claims about the effects of Feline AIDS, FIV.

Every morning, Conservation Force held a 7:30 am breakfast meeting. It was attended each day by Dr.

Craig Packer, the most renowned lion expert in the world, who has studied the lions of Tanzania for more than 40 years — the largest number of lions for the longest time. He was there as part of our team to defeat the Kenya proposal, and he worked to kill it each day, all day long. He was there with the expertise and necessary facts in support of the “absolute importance of hunting” and to prove the “absurdity” of the Kenya proposal. He forthrightly and fearlessly told it like it was and was by himself an army of one. We brought our insurance.

Manuel Esparrago, the Legal and Public Affairs Officer for FACE (Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the European Union) that represents seven million of Europe’s hunters joined our planning and reporting breakfast each morning.



He also served as interpreter with Francophone delegates invited to the Conservation Force lunch held each day. Perhaps most importantly, he lobbied and attended the EU meetings wholly focused on opposing the Kenya lion proposal, and he helped in numerous ways to persuade the EU to finally oppose the Kenya proposal should it come to vote. He began that lobbying back in the EU, where he forthrightly stood against the Antis at every stage of its consideration. The EU had grown to a block vote of 25 countries at the time of this COP!

By the middle of the first week, Craig Packer had directly convinced both the Species Survival Network and Kenya that their defeat was inevitable and then that compromise was not even a consideration. All they could do was exercise their right to withdraw their

proposal with a statement. When the matter finally came up and Kenya withdrew, it embarrassed itself further by making a self-serving statement full of false facts, angering and further offending many present. As they left the room, an angry exchange erupted, blocking the entrance foyer as Tanzania laid into Kenya’s delegates. Suddenly, I found myself doing the same thing toe-to-toe with the Kenyan leading the issue in frustration and anger. It was over. Kenya’s mis-speak and manipulation of the facts had to go un-rebutted on the floor because of the pressure of other CITES business. It was anti-climatic for those of us who have spent the past few years in anticipation. Now, perhaps, we can return our resources to the real conservation of the African lion, the “*DRIVING FORCES*” as Chardonnet described it in Chapter III.

Other Developments

■ The rest of the COP was proactive. There were seven different Proposals or Resolutions that expanded hunting opportunities and recognized the role and value of hunting. The very first business day of the COP actually began with leopard and black rhino quota resolutions. When they all passed, it gave safari hunting a public stamp of approval that seemed to echo around the world. Here’s a quick summary:

Black Rhino: The parties passed a Resolution jointly establishing an annual export quota of five hunting trophies for Namibia and five for South Africa. It is only limited to “adult males” in the Resolution, but both countries promised to limit it even more than that to select surplus males. The Resolution preamble expressly recognizes that in those countries’ “effective conservation, management and monitoring plans and programs are in place” and “that populations are recovering and can sustain limited off-takes through trophy hunting.” The Resolution also expressly recognizes “that the financial benefits derived from trophy hunting of a limited number of specimens will benefit the conservation of the species directly and provide additional incentives for conservation and

habitat protection, when such hunting is done within the framework of national conservation and management plans and programs.” It also recognizes that the states “require additional incentives and means to finance such conservation and management”. It specifies the strict requirement that “all parts” “should be individually marked” with “reference to the country of origin, species, quota number and year of export”.

Unfortunately, the black rhino may not really be able to follow the conservation trail made by white rhino. Unlike the white rhino, it is listed as “endangered” on the US Endangered Species List. In the past, the US Fish & Wildlife Service has as a practice not been able to find that hunting “enhances” any species’ conservation, which it must do as a precondition to granting an import permit. The permitting of black rhino will present its own opportunities and set of problems. The service does have a pending notice of a policy change to issue trophy import permits that it published in August, 2003. We hope for belated movement on that after the presidential election.

Leopard Quotas: Both Namibia and South Africa were granted substantial increases in their quotas for leopard trophies. South Africa’s quota was increased from 75 to 150 per annum (double). Namibia’s was increased from 100 to 250 (more than double). On many occasions, COPs have stated that leopard is in no way endangered in many range states. Namibia says it “has tried to encourage trophy hunting as a preferable alternative to simply destroying problem animals.” “Less than half of the animals destroyed annually in Namibia are trophy-hunted. Through this proposal, Namibia would like to...encourage the trophy hunting of animals that would otherwise be destroyed in any case as problems.”

Nile Crocodile in Namibia: Namibia successfully downlisted its Nile crocodile from Appendix I to Appendix II. We have verified with the USF&WS that trophy import permits will no longer be necessary. That will be effective 90 days after the meeting that

ended October 14. We calculate the effective date to be January 12, 2005. This was a proposal done by Namibia specifically at our request after all of Conservation Force’s efforts over the past few years had failed to resolve an import permit impasse at the USF&WS. It is a pleasure working with a country like Namibia.

Zambia Crocodile: Zambia withdrew its request for a renewal of its crocodile quota after the Secretariat issued



an opinion that its crocodiles were already unconditionally downlisted to Appendix II, and I shared with them a letter Conservation Force received while at the COP confirming that import permits will not be required by the USF&WS. This too was a joint effort between Conservation Force and an

important range state.

White Rhino: The White Rhino in the Kingdom of Swaziland were downlisted from Appendix I to II to permit sales of live rhino and one hunting trophy approximately every second year (1% of 61 rhino per year). This proposal was interesting because it was the only such issue that went to vote. Kenya and Israel argued against it, as they invariably do. The EU block accepted it. Even the U.S. voted for it. The vote was 88 in favor, 15 against, and 21 abstained.

In all, the hunting community experienced one of its most successful CITES COPs in memory. The COP is where the rubber of our hard work hits the road. After 17 days in Bangkok, we are exhausted but rewarded with the results. Our highest thanks must go to Steven Chancellor who helped fund all of the out-of-the-ordinary costs of this COP, as well as most of the Chardonnet Study and our campaign to save lion hunting from its inception. The same to Dexter Ball who has been particularly generous. The African Lion and the whole hunting community owes them a depth of gratitude. We must also thank IGF, Dallas Safari Club, Houston Safari Club and CIC that bore the costs of my personal attendance and registration as they have for years. Little would be possible without Dallas Safari Club and Dallas Ecological Foundation that are our largest general supporters. Also, International Professional Hunters Association, Professional Hunters Association of South Africa, Guide-Outfitters Association of British Columbia, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, African Safari Club of Florida and National Taxidermist Association who provide us general support so that we can represent the interests of everyone in CITES matters. I must also thank Bertrand des Clers, Philippe Chardonnet, Gerhard Damm, Rolf Baldus, Craig Parker, Paul Funston, Kristin Nowell, Flip Stander, Herby Kalchreuter, Eric Mackintosh of Osprey Filming and Manuel Esparrago of FACE. Thank you also, Chrissie Jackson, for all your personal sacrifices and love. – John J. Jackson, III.

Conservation Force Sponsor

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International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife