



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

*"Hunting provides the principal incentive and revenue for conservation.
Hence it is a force for conservation."*

World Conservation Force Bulletin

www.conservationforce.org July 2015

Whose Elephants Are They? Part Two: Lessons from the Sebungwe

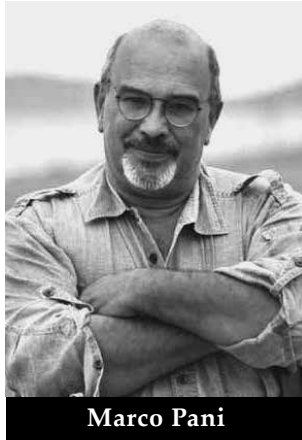
Originally published in African Indaba

This is the second part of an article that appeared in the October 2014 issue of African Indaba, wherein Marco Pani demonstrates that local communities and indigenous people worldwide are a real force for conservation and that poverty reduction through sustainable wildlife utilization should become a top priority objective at the international level to counter the present obsession with law-enforcement and demand-reduction in the international community.

A few summits and months later, what has changed in community-based conservation in Africa?

The only community-based conservation oriented meeting has been the one organized by IUCN SULI, IIED, CEED, Austrian Ministry of Environment and TRAFFIC in South Africa. Titled "Beyond Enforcement" and already featured in African Indaba. This workshop made important conclusions that influenced the Kasane 2015 summit on wildlife trafficking, and developed an interesting and valuable "Theory of change."

Yet and worryingly, top-level international officials do not see community-based conservation as a priority. In a recent article on Al Jazeera the CITES Secretary General is quoted: "John Scanlon, the secretary-general of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or CITES, which has been at the centre of efforts to coordinate the international response, said law enforcement has been emphasized recently because poaching is at a crisis point. Local communities will be instrumental in protecting wildlife in the medium and long term, he said, but only if the animals survive the



Marco Pani

current bloodbath. "If I'm walking across the street and I get hit by a car, the first thing I want someone to do is stop the bleeding," he said. "Once I've recovered, then I can think about whether I need to get more exercise and eat better. Wildlife's been hit hard, and we need a trauma-based response."

So for the CITES SG the local communities will be instrumental only in the medium and long term. I hope that the Parties will think otherwise. It is their Convention.

The community priorities are different from the CITES ones and communities control the fate of the wildlife they live beside. Communities need to obtain legal value from wildlife NOW if that wildlife is to continue. Maybe the CITES SG should be invited somewhere in the African bush (not in a luxury lodge) to see poverty and



Four of the five village chiefs at the Sebungwe Regional Elephant Planning Workshop.

wildlife management challenges with his own eyes. He will eventually and hopefully change the level of priorities for Community-based conservation. The trauma is there. We have been focused on the bleeding for the last 40 years, and I already said in my previous article the tendency to look at the effects rather than the causes of illegal activities should be reversed.

Moving from theory to practise in community-based conservation is the pressing need of today.

Since last year Zimbabwe, together with Tanzania, has been subject to a suspension of import of elephant trophies, unilaterally decided by United States' Fish and Wildlife Service.

Among other actions regarding enhancement of elephant conservation through trophy hunting, Conservation Force has organized to date three workshops in order to draft and finalize the new Elephant Management Plan of Zimbabwe.

The first two, a CAMPIRE workshop and the National Workshop on developing an updated Elephant Management Plan, which were organized with the financial assistance of Dallas Safari Club and Shikar Safari Club, are featured in the February 2015 issue of African Indaba.

The third is the focus of this article. Zimbabwe has maintained a large elephant population for the past 15 years. Since 2001, no statistically significant decline has been observed, and according to the 2014 national aerial survey, the population estimate, within the usual 95% confidence limit, is about 82,000 elephants (not counting small populations in the conservancies and other areas in the south of the country, which likely add up to about 2,500 animals). In 2001, the estimates were about 88,000 elephants countrywide. However, of four regional populations of elephants in Zimbabwe, significant declines are reported in two regions and significant increases in the other two regions.

In late May 2015, Conservation Force funded, along with Padenga Holdings (the biggest crocodile farm of Zimbabwe), the Sebungwe Elephant Management Action Plan Workshop, organized by Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) in collaboration with the

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What's Going on Within Conservation Force and Much More You Need to Know

By John J. Jackson III

In late May, Conservation Force hosted another elephant workshop with Zimbabwe Parks Wildlife Management Authority. This was the Sebungwe Regional Elephant Action Planning Workshop, one of the four regions to have action plans and committees to implement the regional plans. Marco Pani from Rome, Italy, represented Conservation Force at the workshop. An article he has just written follows this as an introduction to this talented man who has become a regular representative of ours in field projects. He is part of the evolving, new Conservation Force and is a paid contractor because of the attention the field projects and growing international crises are demanding.

As of May 1, staff attorney Regina Lennox became full time.

She had been engaged part time for 15 months but has wound up her duties at Loyola Law School where she had taught legal research and writing. Believe me, this is a very promising development and a critical part of the long-term plan of Conservation Force.

Largely with Regina's help, we have filed interventions on behalf of the Republic of Namibia, Dallas Safari Club and Conservation Force in the two federal suits filed by animal rights organizations to stop the issuance of rhino and other enhancement permits. The Friends of Animals suit in the District of Columbia Federal Court has been amended to add Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force as a plaintiff against hunting. FoA is an "advocacy organization" that supports animal rights, the members of which are

vegans. They oppose hunting and even wildlife management. "Hunting in all forms is unethical, socially unjustifiable and ecologically disruptive." See www.friendsofanimals.org: "Hunting - a deceitful and unnecessary act done by humans for purely gratuitous reasons."

FoA takes full credit for having written the recently introduced New York legislation to ban the passage of Big Five trophies through New York. It is also, along with the Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force, an intervenor in SCI's elephant lawsuit to overturn the elephant suspensions in Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

In the PETA suit in the Eastern Federal District Court of Virginia we have had to hire local counsel under court rules, which may prove to be expensive. PETA is also an admitted animal rights advocacy

organization against fishing and hunting. "Fishing: Aquatic Agony." They oppose catch and release fishing, much less hunting that "is Cruel and Unnecessary." Animals are not ours..." See www.peta.org.

These two suits are expected to take up to a year or more of our time, but hopefully there will be good jurisprudence growing out of the cases.

In the meantime, Corey Knowlton, our conservation hero, took a very nice rhino in Namibia. CNN accompanied him on the hunt. The rhino was taken in a charge on the heels of the CNN reporter, who narrowly escaped. One of the certified rhino Corey contemplated taking expired without producing any revenue which, of course, was unfortunate. Corey is a soldier for the hunting world. If you see him, please thank him. ■



Loyola University

Regina Lennox comes on full time as a Conservation Force staff attorney.



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Sebungwe (continued from page 1)

Tashinga Initiative.

The Sebungwe region, south of Lake Kariba, is one of the two regions in Zimbabwe that has witnessed a significant decline of elephants since 2001. According to the unofficial survey results, less than 4,000 elephants were estimated in 2014 (95% CL 2193-4622). In 2001 the estimate was nearly 14,000 elephants (95% CL 11,863-16,113). This represents an approximately 76% decline. After 2001 another survey was done in 2006, which, although showing a slightly higher estimate than 2001 (15,000), showed a quite high carcass ratio. It is likely that the elephant decline started after 2006 but that illegal activities were already high before that date.

The reasons behind the decline are still to be properly analysed and the workshop suggested conducting a proper scientific study on this issue. One of the contributing factors is certainly the growth of the human population in the region that went from 200,000 people in 1980 to more than 700,000 in 2012. It has been scientifically demonstrated that when human population densities reach the threshold of 15 people/km² elephant densities drop dramatically. There are areas now in the Sebungwe with more than 30 people/km².

The workshop prepared an action plan to be inserted in the National Elephant Management Plan in preparation by ZPWMA. The action plan received valuable advice from all the participants, which included five Traditional Leaders (Chiefs). The Traditional Leaders reported that they are not being completely involved in the monitoring and implementation of wildlife activities and their people are not directly benefiting from their natural resources so due to poverty they turned a blind eye to poaching and helped poaching gangs in return of direct benefits. They also reported that they and their communities are not involved in the granting of tourist concessions and they and their communities are not seen as business partners. The Traditional Leaders' concerns were heard and valued at the workshop. Steps were being taken in some areas to get



Discussions during the Sebungwe Workshop.

the communities more involved, such as the development of a community conservancy. But the workshop and action plan placed even more of a focus on engaging the communities.

Several additional key activities on community-based conservation are part of the action plan, such as the revision of the CAMPFIRE Guidelines to increase the share of revenues beyond 55%, to increase revenues at the ward level, and the developing of a legal instrument to provide for traditional leaders to be involved in management and distribution of elephant related benefits.

It was recognized that trophy hunting is the activity that provides the major financial income to communities. Several suggestions to improve its



Participants broke into work groups that tackled the different challenges facing elephant in Sebungwe.

governance were made.

The main lessons from Sebungwe are these: community involvement in wildlife sustainable utilisation may be one of the quickest and easiest responses to counter poaching not the slowest, with the big challenge being not working with communities, but changing our own western attitudes, mind-sets and skills.

Traditional leaders are very supportive of wildlife conservation but

they need to be properly engaged. They want education for their people and education includes wildlife.

If they want they can stop poaching quickly, better than any law enforcement agency. But they need to be enabled to do so.

The international community and especially the development agencies need to realize this quickly. Sustainable use of wildlife cannot be done without the people that are sharing their land with wild animals. They should be priority number one, not law enforcement or the destruction of another ivory stockpile somewhere. The top down approach is not working.

The biggest challenge remains on how to quickly increase the level of revenues for the communities and to lower the level of ownership rights (Appropriate Authority) down to the ward or village level. Zimbabwe, once the leader in wildlife management, has once more the possibility to become it again. There are very positive signals and ZPWMA is very committed.

And finally as Nelson Mandela once said, "Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom. The steps that are needed from the developed nations are clear: The first is ensuring trade justice. I have said before that trade justice is a truly meaningful way for the developed countries to show commitment to bringing about an end to global poverty." CITES Parties, are you listening? ■

Marco Pani is an international consultant in wildlife trade and management with a keen interest in Community-Based Conservation. He has served for five years as Director of TRAFFIC Europe Italy's Office, being instrumental in the drafting of the new CITES legislation of Italy, three years as Associate Enforcement Officer in the CITES Secretariat in Geneva and nine years as staff in the Italian Ministry of Environment. He is a member of the CEESP/SSC Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group (SULi) and Crocodile Specialist Groups of IUCN, Vice-President of IWMC-World Conservation Trust and Advisor to Conservation Force.

Update on Airline Trophy Embargoes

In May Conservation Force was able, through a complaint letter to the President of the American Bar Association, to remove the improper suggestion that the Association was sponsoring an email petition to Delta Airlines to embargo hunting trophies. A committee chair posted the petition under the auspices of the Association and even included misrepresentations

confusing lawful trade with unlawful trade. The representations were not authorized and were deleted.

On June 8th the CITES Secretariat announced signing of a memorandum of understanding with the International Air Transportation Association, IATA, that included language "ensuring the safe and secure transport of legally traded

wildlife." We are hoping this will be the unfolding solution to the misdirected airline embargoes.

In reality, most unlawful trade occurs in maritime shipping, in containers that are inspected less seldom. The mislabeling of animal parts or failure to label is a criminal violation of the Lacey Act. ■

Free Legal Aid to Import 2015 Tanzania Elephant Trophies

The US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) has not yet made its findings for import of elephant hunting trophies from Tanzania for 2015. When it does, it will be subject to administrative appeal by anyone with a pending permit application. Because of the dire poaching crisis in some parts of Africa and Tanzania, we have chosen to work with Tanzania and USFWS as a partner to get the elephant through this period. Nevertheless, we have scientifically documented that tourist safari hunting does enhance the survival of the elephant and is sustainable. It really is essential to control of poaching and recovery of the elephant population in that important country. We have been narrowing the remaining issues preventing trophy imports.

Our participation is fortified through the filing of trophy import permits for hunts to take place in 2015. By representing 2015 hunters Conservation Force has a place at the table, access to information, and the administrative means to provide information to USFWS that it legally must take into consideration. We build a permanent "administrative record" that offers all sorts of opportunities that

itself can be built upon and which the courts and Congress can tap into. Also, through the permitting process, we have no less than three opportunities under the law to present and argue evidence both in writing and orally before the Director and others up and down the chain of command. Yours truly has been the leader in successfully following this technique for the past 25 years starting with the first closure of elephant hunting trophies in 1989. We serve as the legal representative of the test import permit applicant as a free public conservation service for the greater good.

Over the years we have represented some of the greatest hunters in the world who have lent their names and hunting ambitions to us to reopen or pioneer import permits for different species. Why doesn't anyone else do this? Because it is too daunting and is given as a free service. Because it takes real commitment, dedication and resolve. Because it is not necessarily a quick fix. Because it is a measurable target with measurable results, not smoke and mirrors.

In 2014, we built a strong administrative record, but USFWS

would not make a final decision without Tanzania's population survey results. In 2015, we have these results. They are not what we would have preferred, but that does not mean we cannot show enhancement. We need to address the remaining issues to get imports reopened and for hunting to regain its place as a force for elephant conservation. While every regulatory requirement is an impasse, the fulfillment of that requirement is documented proof of conservation.

In short, we need a few hunters who plan to hunt elephant in Tanzania in 2015 to permit Conservation Force to be their legal representative for free. We do it all, so nothing is required of you other than helping complete the first page of the application. Please contact Regina Lennox or myself by email (regina.lennox@conservationforce.org or cf@conservationforce.org), or by phone at 504-837-1233 or postal mail at 3240 S. I-10 Service Rd. W., Suite 200, Metairie, LA 70001-6911. We need your full identification and contact information, hunting operator and contact information and the date and place of your hunt. ■

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