



“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

□ Highlights of 2005

■ The year 2005 can be judged by events that took place and also by what did not occur. Here is a quick rundown, along with follow-up insight.

- The Endangered Species Act did not get reformed, but a reform bill did finally pass the House and another was introduced in the Senate. The downside is neither would reform the foreign species flaws in the existing act. Moreover the alternative regulatory reform that would permit hunting to be used as a tool to enhance the survival of foreign game species has not been adopted by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS) as proposed more than two years ago. You would think the Bush Administration would have done more in five years.

- The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act passed and was signed into law. It was a long time in coming but was overwhelmingly supported when passed. It protects firearm manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers against suits for the intentional misuse of firearms by third parties such as criminals. On the other hand, the United Nations moved closer, but only closer, to the regulatory inclusion of

lawfully owned small arms with those unlawfully owned. San Francisco banned the lawful possession of handguns and NRA quickly filed suit. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, FEMA prohibited possession of firearms by seizing them on sight and prohibiting possession of them in FEMA tempo-



rary housing. Again the NRA timely filed suit and obtained a court restraining order against the practices. At the end of the year, Canada's Liberal Party Prime Minister pledged to ban all handguns, but was not expected to get re-elected. The Ithaca Gun Company founded in 1880 was liquidated in late November.

- Zambia opened limited safari elephant hunting and Botswana experienced its first safari lion hunting since 2001. On the other hand, South Africa did not use its increased leopard quota granted to it at CITES COP13 and Namibia did not allocate its Black Rhino CITES quota. South Africa is embroiled in how to allocate its increased CITES leopard quota, as is Namibia with its five black rhino. Some venture that black economic opportunity and empowerment is the reason for both delays. RSA authorities are withholding leopard permits until professional hunting is more integrated and the authorities in Namibia want to ensure that the indigenous communities share the black rhino conservation rewards. Two black rhino hunts have taken place in RSA of the five on quota per annum. The other three have been allocated by DEAT but not reported to have been taken. The price, identity of the hunters and circumstances are not being publicized.

- Robin Hurt won the African Professional Hunters Association's Ox of Okavango Award for Conservation for the Cullman & Hurt Community Wild-

life Conservation Project. Founding Conservation Force member Baron Bertrand des Clers has been selected for the prestigious Peter Hathaway Capstick Hunting Heritage Award for his lifetime of conservation and hunting leadership. Jimmie Rosenbuch of Glacier Guides has been awarded Weatherby Foundation International’s Weatherby Hunting and Conservation Award for his lifetime of hunting and conservation achievements. All three, we are proud to say, personally support and have long been conservation partners on multiple projects with Conservation Force.

- The Conservation of the African lion has been advanced more than anytime in history. The West and Central African workshops were successfully com-



pleted in Douala and the East and South Africa Workshops are to all planned and will be starting the first week of January, 2006. The safari hunting world has played a pivotal role in the unprecedented conservation effort. For example, Conservation Force has 20 lion projects and programs across all of Africa, and its leaders serve on the African Lion Working Group and Workshop Advisory Committee. Conservation Force’s projects include everything from the funding of the now-famous Tanzania man-eating lion study published in the National Journal of Science in August to the development of field-judging manuals for trophy selection in the bush.

- The number of States Sportsmen’s Caucuses has grown by leaps and bounds to 26 states. The Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation spearheads the effort and National Assembly with the support of many of America’s top

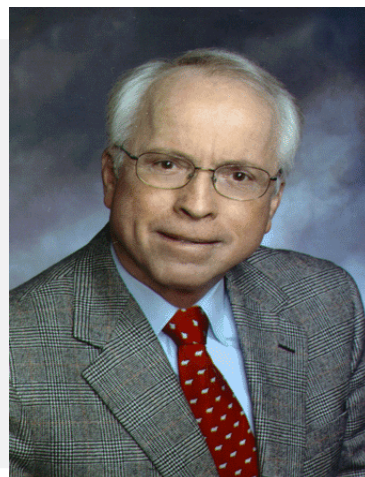
sportshunting and fishing organizations. It is a decade-old promise that is finally coming to pass.

- Grand Slam/OVIS held its first convention, which was a total success. The upside is that the FNAWS Convention was also a record-breaker that was bigger and better than ever. Both organizations have since signed a memorandum of understanding between themselves for the benefit of all.

- The nonresident issue came to a screaming head. The Reid Bill passed as a rider to an emergency military expenditures appropriation bill giving states total discretion over the licensing of both nonresident hunters and anglers. One by one, the five nonresident suits were all dismissed. One dismissal has been appealed. The long term trend of worsening discrimination began again. By invitation, yours truly debated the issue before the American Wildlife Conservation Partners at their annual meeting and also before the National Assembly of States Sportsmen’s Caucuses. We stressed the inequity of discrimination on federal lands because federal lands are funded by all citizens at the cost of billions of dollars per year (more than state wildlife budgets) and are primarily managed by the federal government.

- The Panel of Experts Report in South Africa was initiated and completed. It recommended heightened oversight of hunting standards and norms by the national government. It is expected to eliminate the unpopular practices of some in that large hunting community. (More below.) Similar oversight at the national level was also put in place in Russia, where it contributed to delays and the temporary curtailment of some bear hunting.

- The Bella Coola Outfitting Company was sold by its operator to anti-hunting interest on the British Columbia coast. It remains to be seen if the government will permit the transfer of the hunting area. Legally, the hunting area is for hunting, not anti-hunting: i.e., the government is the real holder of the rights and must approve and consummate the sale. This was a long time in coming at that location. Six First Nation tribes have turned against non-



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World Conservation Force Bulletin

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Publisher

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resident trophy hunting of bear and the instigating Raincoast Conservation Society has made the most of that. On the upside, the USF&WS finally proposed the downlisting of the Grizzly bear in the Yellowstone ecosystem.

- Anti-hunters proposed the listing of all polar bear and later threatened the USF&WS with suit for not making a preliminary determination on their petition within the required 90 days. We should get the results in early 2006. Attention to polar bear was further spiked when the Polar Bear Specialist Group of IUCN’s Species Survival Commission reclassified the bear as “vulnerable” because of a continuing potential climate-caused meltdown of the bear’s habitat. Strangely, the IUCN Red List criteria for listing does not include climate change: i.e., there is no such criteria in the listing process. The Inuits increased their hunting quota for polar bear, then decreased them when Greenland was found to be overharvesting their bear. Though other increases in their quota were criticized, the increases seem to be justified.

- The USF&WS again failed to approve importation of polar bear taken in the Gulf of Boothia. In fact, the Service has not approved import of any new game species or destinations since the Bush Administration first took office five years ago. That includes Gulf of Boothia polar bear, markhor from anywhere in Pakistan (ESA-listed as well as those only CITES-listed), cheetah from Namibia, black rhino, black-faced

impala, wood bison from the Yukon and elephant from Mozambique, Zambia or Cameroon. At the completion of the first year of Bush’s second term, trophy importation reform is suffering a record dry spell of indifference and is being accorded low-priority treatment. Moreover, the administration is mum on the subject.

- The concept of “Conservation Hunting” was launched by the new IUCN North American Sustainable Use Specialist Group that itself was re-estab-



lished in 2005. The group is expected to focus initially on the conservation benefits of hunting by indigenous people in the Canadian North.

- The White House Cooperative Conservation Congress was held to implement a White House Executive Order that federal authorities partner with private non-governmental conservationists for mutually shared conservation goals. This historic event was attended by 1,200 of the top conservation leaders in the United States. It was modeled after such a conference held

by President Teddy Roosevelt a century before. We used the event to suggest cooperation on the use of importation of hunting trophies as a conservation tool for listed game species, so more may be forthcoming.

- The USF&WS listed the Scimitar-horned Oryx, addax and Dama gazelle as endangered in a decade-old proposal with an innovative approach that still allows the hunting of the species within the USA without a permit. Suit was quickly filed by the antis against the allowance of hunting, not against the listing. The rule does prevent any further importations of the three species from foreign lands.

- The year 2005 also brought Hurricane Katrina, the worst natural disaster in US history. The little known heroes who saved nearly 100,000 lives was the staff of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The downside was that the HSUS used the disaster as a media opportunity to create an image for itself of being a pet welfare organization by participating in what it billed as the greatest animal rescue in history.

- Assistant Secretary of Interior Craig Manson and Director of the Fish & Wildlife Service Steve Williams resigned. Steve Williams became the all-important Director of the Wildlife Management Institute, and Craig Manson returned to a law school teaching post. Matt Hogan became Acting Director of the Service until Dave Hall was confirmed as the new director. Dave Hall is a hunter.

Briefly Noted

Black Rhino: We’ve learned that a second black rhino has been taken in South Africa. The provincial authorities who issued the permit actually required the American hunter to promise not to attempt to import his trophy into the US. The hunter was required to sign a written agreement that he would not import or even attempt to import the trophy into the US. We’ve heard several reasons advanced for the required agreement not to import, but

none meet our satisfaction. Perhaps we should be happy because it makes our life easier not having to worry about, and labor on, an effort to get the USF&WS to permit black rhino imports. It’s very sad when things come to this. Maybe South African authorities fear that the USF&WS will invent reasons not to permit the trophy imports that will not reflect well on South Africa, for that has been the case in the past. The service can always find rea-

sons to deny importation, but seldom to permit importation. Nevertheless, black rhino trophies can’t be imported without trying and the conservation revenue stream and incentives can’t be as great until imports are approved, if ever.

Life-size African Black Rhino Reproduction: Taxidermist Harry Paulson has completed a true life-size reproduction of a black rhino. It has horns of 21 and 12 inches, and a real likeness ap-

pearance. Harry Paulson is offering the reproduction for \$10,000, first come, first serve. Half of that is a tax-deductible donation to Conservation Force. If interested, contact Harry at 253-796-0878: or at taxidermyschool@juno.com. Ask him to email you a photograph of this uncommonly fine reproduction.

Grizzly Proposal for Delisting: The USF&WS has finally published a proposal to delist all grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, 70 FR 6985, November 17, 2005. It is now listed as threatened. Comments will be considered until February 15, 2006. There are other populations in the US that will remain on the list for many years, or forever. The Service's calculation of allowable mortality (quota) is of special interest to hunters. The USF&WS has determined that the bear population can withstand a total mortality of 15 percent of the total number of males and still increase at four to seven percent each year. "Independent males can endure a relatively high mortality rate without affecting the overall stability or trajectory of the population because they contribute little to overall population of growth," the notice states. Female mortality of nine percent of adult females per annum still allows populations to increase at three percent per year with a resultant stable increasing population. These mortality limits are much more liberal than those based on the long followed Harris Method of 1986 which concluded that bears could only sustain approximately a 6.5 percent human-caused mortality without population decline. That recommendation in turn had been lowered to only four percent to allow for unreported/unknown mortalities. (This now outdated method has also led to very conservative grizzly hunting quotas in British Columbia as well. We hope British Columbia is taking note.) "The study team concluded that Harris's (1986) method was no longer the best available nor the most biologically valid," according to the service. The service determined that grizzlies also benefit from the greater access they have to large-bodied ungulates in the

Yellowstone area, particularly the 100,000 elk, 29,500 mule and white-tail deer, 5,800 moose, 4,000 bison, etc. Meat constitutes 45 percent of female grizzly diet and 79 percent of male diet. Elk meat is 53 percent of grizzly diets and bison 24 percent. The service does anticipate that controlled recreational hunting will take place if the bear is downlisted but "all hunting mortalities will be counted toward the mortality limits for the population and will be strictly controlled to assure that mortality limits are not exceeded...."



The bear population has increased at the rate of four to seven percent per year since the early 1990's. The population in the Yellowstone ecosystem has gone from an estimated 229 to 580 in 2004 over little more than a decade. **More on the Bella Coola Buyout:** The sale of the Bella Coola hunting area may never see the light of day. The

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government must accept the private sale to transfer the rights, then hunting must take place to keep the hunting area. Moreover, the new private operators must be trained and qualified in hunting to obtain the hunting lease. The new owners have to actually pass an examination. One must have an assistant guide license for a total of 24 months to be qualified to become a licensed outfitter. Even if the new owner pays \$1.35 million and gets an outfitters license or certificate, the guide area will revert to the Crown for resale if it is not used. It will then be advertised and resold by the regional manager but only to a "person qualified to hold a guide outfitter's license." The Raincoast Conservation Society is dedicated to the stopping of hunting, particularly grizzly bear hunting. We can't imagine the Crown consummating the certificate transfer. Though the British Columbia Coast is absolutely awesome, this is but a small fraction of it. The hunting area is only one of 29 in that region, and that region is only one of nine regions. The owner, Leonard Ellis, is only one of 245 outfitters in British Columbia and one of 42 in the Caribou Region. An economic analysis of the Guide Outfitting Industry in British Columbia was completed in 2002. It described the industry as growing "despite difficulties confronting many tourism businesses after 9/11." There were 5,144 nonresident hunters that year. The Caribou Region containing Bella Coola had the only decline in number of outfitters from 50 to 42, while the number province-wide remained the same. It remains to be seen whether the regional manager will transfer the Crown's title to the Guide Outfitting area, whether the new owner will qualify as a guide outfitter and finally whether they can keep the area or it will be revoked and resold. In short, the transfer is against the law. Rest assured, this development is not news to Conservation Force. We monitor the Raincoast Conservation Society and have been helping deal with the local First Nations antagonism toward non-resident hunting for years. Much of the area was already closed. —
John J. Jackson, III.