



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 August 2015

### Significant Suspensions of Trophy Imports Under New EU Regulations

European regulations now require that member states issue import certificates for trophies of six species: elephant, lion, white rhino, hippopotamus, argali and polar bear. The Member States each issue their own certificate/import permit based upon their own Scientific Authority's determination. That Member Authority has to follow the opinions of the Scientific Review Group (SRG) which is made up of all the EU member Scientific Authorities. As the regulations summarize, opinions by the larger SRG "are also those of each Member State's Scientific Authority." If there is no SRG opinion, then the State Member is free to act independently, but once the SRG issues an opinion, then, with some rare exceptions, the Member State must honor that opinion.

On April 9, 2015 at the 71st Meeting of the Scientific Review Group on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora (SRG) issued or confirmed negative opinions on Cameroon hippopotamus, Zambia elephant hunting trophies, Cameroon elephant trophies, lion from Burkina Faso and lion from Cameroon. The Cameroon and Burkina Faso opinions were confirmations of earlier negative decisions. Moreover, the Cameroon hippopotamus opinion does provide for 10 hunting trophies, which modifies the total prior prohibition.

On July 2, 2015 at the 72nd meeting of the SRG, the April negative Zambia elephant opinion was maintained and negative opinions were issued for Tanzania and Mozambique elephant hunting trophies.

In July, review of argali from Mongolia and lion from Zambia were not decided, apparently deferred to the next SRG meeting in three months.

A positive opinion requires more than non-detriment or sustainable



John J. Jackson III

finding.

The conditions assessed by the SRG to issue opinions with regard to the sustainability of import of Annex A hunting trophies are the following:

*Trophy hunting should be part of a careful species management plan that should, as appropriate:*

- *be based on sound biological data collected from the target population(s)*
- *clearly demonstrate that harvest levels are sustainable*
- *be monitored by professional biologists*
- *be promptly modified if necessary to maintain the conservation aims*
- *demonstrate that illegal activities are under control*
- *produce significant and tangible conservation benefits for the species*
- *provide benefits to, and be in cooperation with, the local people who share the area with or suffer by the species concerned*

This is the equivalent of the current USFWS *enhancement* requirement for elephant and other species.

We have not yet found a timely way to get the full reasoning and/or information relied upon in these negative opinions, although we are working on it. The negative opinions have too large an impact on conservation of the species to ignore. We know from the SRG website ([http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/srg\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/srg_en.htm)) that in April the SRG made a positive opinion for elephant imports from Tanzania, but in July reversed itself and made a negative opinion.

It is interesting to note that the SRG made a positive finding about Zimbabwe elephant in July and we presume this was because of (at least in part) the work Conservation Force and its allies are doing there cooperatively with Zim Parks, CAMPFIRE and the hunting community. We have been doing a great

deal of work on lion in Burkina Faso, but it apparently did not measure up in the July confirmation. Burkina Faso adopted the six-year age approach, have a recent survey documenting a doubling of the lion population, a new management plan and more. We will follow up.

The European Commission publishes the SRG opinions quarterly in the Official Journal of the European Union. In that publication the species with negative SRG opinions are described as species "prohibited introduction." Under Article 1, "The introduction into the Union of the species...is prohibited." Although there is some dispute about the effect and effective date of a negative SRG opinion, 20 days after published by the Commission, the regulation clearly provides that the prohibition is binding on "all Member States." That might be one legally binding date, but other regulations make it clear that SRG opinions are to be followed by the Member States from the time rendered. It is yet to be seen how the different



states will follow the opinions before the exporting range country even knows of the SRG opinion.

Some of the animals already listed as prohibited include hippopotamus from Mozambique and lion from Ethiopia.

This new burden on the hunting community and to the wildlife, habitat and wildlife management infrastructure is one of the reasons Conservation Force has recently applied and been admitted to FACE, the six million member Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the European

Union, as an Associate Member. We already hold full membership and board or board-level positions in CIC and IGF. This should complete the network circle necessary to stay atop these growing burdens on developing countries. That said, no one in Europe provides the services that Conservation Force does in the USA, yet the prohibition of key trophies into the EU can sever the last lifeline.

Also see <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/elephant%20>

hunting%20trophies.pdf for information on the EU ban on the import of elephant hunting trophies from Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia. Another resource is [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-15-5316\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5316_en.htm), which details the EU's joining the CITES convention to help in the preparation of the Commission's wildlife trafficking action plan, links to which can be found under News & Alerts on the Conservation Force website ([www.conservationforce.org](http://www.conservationforce.org)). ■



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## Release of IUCN Red List

On June 23, 2015 the IUCN released its Red List update ([www.iucnredlist.org/news/conservation-successes-overshadowed-by-more-species-declines-iucn-red-list-update](http://www.iucnredlist.org/news/conservation-successes-overshadowed-by-more-species-declines-iucn-red-list-update)). There were no surprises for the hunting community in the Red Listings. In fact, despite all the airline embargoes, new EU regulations and USFWS listings and suspensions, no game animal of consequence declined in listing status. Like in the USA, game animals as a class are faring better than so many other species. There must be something to that.

One game animal was downlisted from *Endangered* to *Near Threatened*, moving two levels on the IUCN ranking system. That is the markhor (*Capra falconeri*), which has been featured in the *World Conservation Force Bulletin* since its first publication. Notably, the authors advise that, "Stable and increasing subpopulations [of markhor] are restricted to areas with sustainable hunting management areas and protected areas. Were these conservation activities to cease in the future, poaching would likely increase..." The population declines had ceased with the institution of hunting programs. It is maybe important to note that the regulated hunting was begun in populations in historical decline. The hunting was



the force or medicine or cure for the chronic poaching, loss of habitat and decline. It also funded the operating budget. Conservation Force's founding Board Member Bart O'Gara, Ph.D. is duly credited with starting the science-advised, hunting-based conservation hunting program. He worked for the USFWS but no one told him it was unsustainable because the population was in decline. Hunting was instituted as the solution and the net benefits made it sustainable and more.

The black rhino in Namibia (*Diceros bicornis ssp. bicornis* - common name southwestern black rhino) is confirmation of the potential of hunting as a force for conservation. Despite the antics alleging it is "critically endangered" in the two suits they have filed, the IUCN has ranked it as *Vulnerable* since 2000. That status continues, but was close to being downlisted to *Near Threatened*. Its population continues to increase as it has for more than three generations.

All other black rhino subspecies remain *Critically Endangered* as they have been since 1996. That said, since a low in 1995, the population has been increasing and continues to increase because of the conservation strategies of RSA, Namibia and Zimbabwe. It is of interest to note that "[t]o maintain rapid population growth rates and

prevent potential habitat damage if the population overshoots carrying capacity, populations of black rhino should be managed at densities below long-term ecological carrying capacity (i.e. below zero growth rate.)”

The white rhino that you read so much about remains *Near Threatened* where it has been since 2002. The reason it is not listed below that to *Least Concern* is the increased poaching and all that is driving that poaching. In the absence of all the conservation measures, it potentially could decrease in numbers to *Vulnerable* in five years. Once again, the majority exist in RSA, Namibia and Zimbabwe. “If current trends (poaching) continue, numbers in South Africa could start to decline by 2016. In southern Africa, live sale of white rhino on auction (and limited sport hunting of surplus males) has also created incentives for private sector conservation and generated much needed funds which can help pay the high cost of successfully monitoring, protecting and managing rhino.” Of note, numbers have tripled since white rhino were downlisted to Appendix II for live export and for continued export of hunting trophies. So much for claims that regulated hunting stimulates poaching.

The mountain lion/puma remains of *Least Concern*. It had been downlisted from *Near Threatened* to *Least Concern* in 2008. It does not get any better than that.

Cheetah remain *Near Threatened*.

Leopard remain *Near Threatened*.

African elephant remain *Vulnerable*.

The brown and grizzly bear of North America and Mexico are also continued as being of *Least Concern*, the lowest level of concern. The bear is in overall decline, but its Red List level is as low as it gets and it is huntable despite that decline. There are 200,000

worldwide, half of which are in Russia where they exceed 100,000. There are 33,000 in the USA, 25,000 in Canada and 14,000 in Europe. Though some hunting is unsustainable because “many countries do not have the resources to develop, implement, or enforce adequate monitoring programs and sustainable management plans,” it remains of *Least Concern* because it is not of survival-level impact.

Black bear remains of *Least Concern*, where it has been since 2008. Its global population is “more than twice that of all other species of bear combined.” “Moreover, in most areas populations are expanding numerically and geographically.” In North America the total number is 850,000 - 950,000. The sport harvest in Canada and the US take 40,000 - 50,000 annually. The Louisiana



black bear is ESA listed as threatened, but there is a pending USFWS proposal to remove it from the ESA as recovered.

Polar bear continues to be ranked as *Vulnerable*. It has been *Vulnerable* since 2006. It is interesting that the IUCN SSC Polar Bear Specialist Group recommended the listing because of potential decline of 30% within three generations (45 years) due to expected decline of habitat quality and occurrence, yet they state that “no direct relationship exists between these measures (loss of habitat and quality and quantity)” and the abundance of

polar bear. Population level at time of assessment remains 20,000 to 25,000 bears. The overall population trend is “decreasing,” although Conservation Force questions this assertion.

Mountain nyala in Ethiopia are not doing so well. They have been listed as *Endangered* since 1996 and remain at that listing. They are decreasing. The authors conclude, “It is likely that only 1,500 to 2,000 mountain nyalas survive throughout the range” but admit that “a recent survey has indicated the total population may be higher, perhaps up to 4,000.” There is obviously a scientific dispute going on within parties in Ethiopia.

The cheetah remains *Vulnerable* where it has been since 1996. Its population is described as being in decline but recent overall decline is not identified.

The hippopotamus is described as *Vulnerable*, as it has been rated since 1996. Of interest, Mozambique is cited as one of its “conservation stronghold(s),” yet the CITES significant trade review process and Mozambique’s lack of capacity to respond to it continues to hamper import of those hippopotamus trophies.

Cape buffalo are of *Least Concern*, as they have been since 2008. The global estimate is over 900,000 animals. Protected areas, which include gazetted hunting areas, hold most of the population.

Argali are rated as *Near Threatened*. It was downlisted from *Vulnerable* in 2008 and there it remains. Its overall population is in “significant decline”...“making the species close to qualifying for *Vulnerable*.”

The African lion remains as *Vulnerable* where it has been since 1996. The authors make a point of stating it is near *Endangered*. ■

## European Union Accession to CITES

On the 8th of July, 2015 the EU joined CITES as the 181st Party. Although designed for States/Countries to be Parties, a CITES amendment came into effect in November 2013 which allows “regional economic integration organizations” to join CITES.

In total, the EU and its States/Countries will have 28 votes at the Conferences of the Parties (CoPs). CITES voting positions “will continue to be decided with EU Member States through a Council Decision.” This, the EU press release states, “will reinforce visibility

and accountability of the EU...” In short, it will give the EU a presence as an entity and “global actor in the environment and trade areas.” Obviously the EU wants a greater “role” beyond its borders. See [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-15-5316\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5316_en.htm) for the press release. ■



## Two Past CITES Secretariat Generals Urge CITES Action on Airline Embargoes

To our gratification, two past Secretary Generals of CITES have called for CITES to take action to protect CITES itself and wildlife from reckless airline embargoes against lawful, regulated trade. The letter follows:

Warsaw, Lausanne, 4 July 2015

Mister Executive Director of UNEP,  
Mister Chairman of the Standing Committee,  
Mister Secretary-General of the Convention,  
Members of the Standing Committee,  
Madam Chair of the Animals Committee  
Subject: Protecting CITES Against Irrelevance

We, the undersigned, former Secretaries-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), are concerned that the recent embargoes by airlines and marine shipping companies will ultimately prove damaging to wildlife and to the livelihoods of those in poor communities and in small island nations. These embargoes are now taking epidemic proportions by involving both air and marine transportation and covering lawfully acquired wild specimens such as hunting trophies, shark fins, live birds, laboratory animals, etc.

The embargoes are being actively promoted by a number of "conservation" groups and are deliberately calculated to bypass CITES ("leapfrogging CITES"). In so doing, they damage international cooperation on wildlife trade and thereby make effective conservation more difficult to accomplish. Indeed, the symbolism of the most recent ban, by South African Airways, could also have a negative impact on CoP17 if it is portrayed - inaccurately of course - as a means to achieve what CITES has failed to deliver for the animal rights activists.

We welcome the excellent presentation by the Secretary-General of the Convention, John Scanlon, to airlines executives at

the recent IATA meeting in Miami. His presentation of the social, economic and environmental consequences of the illegal trade in wildlife specimens, as well as of the necessity for the airlines to be concerned and involved in assisting eliminate illegal activities pertaining to wildlife, were clear, precise and convincing.

However, we are concerned that the pressure being applied on airline executives by the above-mentioned groups is obscuring the reality that, by eliminating the transportation of legally acquired wildlife specimens, livelihoods in the developing world will be destroyed and targeted species could be negatively impacted. The payoff for the airlines and shipping companies "gaining" an enhanced image of socially concerned corporation appears to be too enticing for some executives to resist.

The executives also appear not to understand how their embargoes, when applied to legitimately acquired specimens, are in direct conflict with CITES provisions. This undermines the framework of international cooperation that has been carefully and painstakingly pieced together over a number of decades. If no means exists to transport specimens legally acquired under CITES provisions, where is the need for CITES? It becomes irrelevant and will be replaced by a mishmash of uncoordinated and informal policies.

While private enterprises are, of course, free to make their own commercial decisions, it is important that CITES communicates quickly, publicly and with clarity that such decisions offer no replacement for the CITES process. Airline executives cannot be expected to be wildlife conservation experts. They should be cautioned that seemingly well-intentioned actions may have devastating effects. It is difficult to see how being accomplices to the disappearance of livelihoods in developing countries and

small island nations could ever enhance their corporate reputations.

This hemorrhage must stop and, hopefully, some of the recent slipshod decisions will be reversed. We would like to see those organizations and groups involved "that supposedly support the objectives of CITES" stop their misguided and damaging actions against CITES decisions and the conservation of wildlife species.

We hope that the above mentioned suggestions and advice will not be construed as undue criticisms. They reflect our desire and commitment to assisting in the maintenance of CITES as a credible and relevant institution. For the sake of wildlife, CITES must not fall into oblivion and irrelevance.

<b>Willem Wijnstekers</b>	<b>Eugene Lapointe</b>
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**Conservation Force Facebook Page Up and Running**

Conservation Force's Facebook page is now live at [www.facebook.com/conservationforce](http://www.facebook.com/conservationforce). It will function as a companion to the more in-depth and voluminous information posted at our website and will feature photos, breaking conservation news and information hunters need to know. Check it out and give us a "like." Please bear with us as we get up and running. ■



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