



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 January 2017

## FWS Makes Finding on Antis' Petition to Up-List All African Leopard to Endangered

On November 29, the FWS issued a press release announcing a 90-day finding that further action may be warranted on a petition to up-list all African leopard (*panthera pardus*) to "endangered" under the ESA. Currently, leopard from Northern and Western Africa are listed as endangered but those from Southern, Eastern, and parts of Central Africa are listed as threatened. The FWS' finding does not change the leopard's status. It is just the opening of a review of its current listing status. However, it means the FWS has opened a review of the leopard's status to make a future finding on whether it should be up-listed to endangered. The process will take two or more years unless denied sooner. We do not expect the leopard to be up-listed but do expect more stringent import regulations in two or more years.

On November 30, the FWS published a notice of this 90-day finding in the Federal Register. The notice requests "substantive" information on the leopard's biology, range and population status; the effects of climate change; and the five listing factors defined in



John J. Jackson, III

the ESA: (a) habitat loss or modification, (b) over-utilization, (c) disease or predation, (d) inadequate regulation, and (e) other factors that affect its "continued existence." The comment deadline is January 30, 2017, which is a short window for a foreign species.

Conservation Force is preparing a submission and working with range

nations to obtain the most recent data on leopard range, status, offtakes, and management. We are also ripping apart the listing petition (filed by the usual suspects Humane Society, Center for Biological Diversity, International Fund for Animal Welfare, and Fund for Animals), and evaluating the science on which it purports to be based. We are encouraging all those with relevant data to submit it to us, for inclusion in our filing, or to the FWS directly through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), Docket FWS-HQ-ES-2016-0131 before January 30. There will be at least one more comment period if the FWS finds it warrants up-listing to endangered.

The FWS' decision comes on top of the October decision at CITES CoP 17 which recommends that range states

review and justify their leopard quotas, which will eventually be reviewed and perhaps revised at CoP 18 in three years. The CITES leopard quotas have been set by the Parties at CoPs over the course of time. Now a protocol has been established to review those quotas and the underlying non-detriment findings to make sure they are still sound. Both the Animals and the Standing Committees are to make the reviews and report recommendations to the Parties to the next CoP.

Much of the focus on leopard arose following their up-listing from "Near Threatened" to "Vulnerable" in the 2016 IUCN *Red List* assessment (described in our September Bulletin). The *Red List* "inferred" a decline in leopard populations in Southern and Eastern Africa based on declines in historic range and prey base. As we wrote in September, we do not think the inferred decline is accurate or endangering given the leopard's adaptability and vast habitat. In any event, the IUCN authors did not assess Southern and Eastern African leopard as endangered. "Vulnerable" is equivalent to threatened, not endangered. Further, in 2016 range states have taken steps to review and revise their leopard management and hunting practices. We will present this data in our FWS submission. ■

## Conservation Force Presents to State Legislators on Unlawful State Trophy Bans



From November 30 to December 3, legislators from 30 states met in Biloxi, Mississippi for the 13th National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses Sportsman-Legislator Summit. This annual event brings together members of state sportsmen's caucuses, along with industry leaders and representatives from sportsmen's organizations, to share knowledge and discuss hunting, angling, resource access, and other conservation-related issues.

Conservation Force co-sponsored Regina Lennox on state bans of Big Five trophies.

the Legislator Summit because of our important message. We were also a speaker. Conservation Force attorney Regina Lennox presented on a panel examining animal rights organizations' tactics to "whittle away sportsmen's traditions" in state legislatures. Regina focused on the state bans against Big Five trophies.

Our presentation differentiated state bans on commercial activity, which usually include exceptions for federally-authorized imports, from state bans (like that in New Jersey) that criminalize possession and import of

animal parts, including trophies, and do not contain exception for activities authorized by federal law. It explained how the ESA “preempts” (voids) any state law that seeks to “prohibit what is authorized pursuant to an exemption or permit provided for in” the ESA or FWS regulations implementing the ESA. It described New Jersey’s ban on import, possession, etc. of African lion, leopard, elephant and rhino trophies and Conservation Force’s successful suit, in which we obtained a court judgment that this ban was preempted with respect to federally authorized trophies. Regina also pointed out that state trophy bans are both unlawful, and represent bad policy because they rob listed species of the “enhancement” the FWS must find to allow imports in the first place.

Several legislators asked questions, made comments, or offered thanks about our presentation. The ESA and the

“enhancement” gives state legislators a weapon to use against efforts to enact hunting trophy bans in their states. Animal rights organization Friends of Animals recently reconfirmed its intent to push “Cecil’s Law” – a Big Five trophy ban – in states with important ports of entry for Big Five trophies. Our presentation was timely and will assist pro-sustainable-use legislators in the event Friends of Animals brings its “Cecil Campaign” to their states.

We will continue to monitor developments across the country and will contend with this Cecil Campaign state by state as necessary. We need support for this and still owe legal fees to local counsel in New Jersey. Though we have won the first round we are busy gearing up to finish the fight across the US because the antis claim to continue pursuing the import ban in certain states. ■

## Convention on Biodiversity CoP 13

Conservation Force has just attended the Convention on Biodiversity. President John Jackson and Board Member Shane Mahoney participated with many friends of the hunting community, including Namibia. Here’s what Namibia released during the CBD CoP in an article published by the Namibia Economist on December 5 (<https://economist.com.na/20810/general-news/wildlife-can-contribute-more-to-economic-growth>):

### WILDLIFE CAN CONTRIBUTE MORE TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

By Freeman Ngulu

Recent natural wildlife capital accounts indicate that the wildlife trade and activities based on wildlife, contributed almost 4% to GDP with a reasonable chance of massive expansion.

Speaking in Cancun, Mexico at the 13th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, Environment and Tourism Minister Pohamba Shifeta said this week that proceeds from the legal trade in wildlife and wildlife products in Namibia,



The Convention on Biodiversity took place in Cancun, Mexico.

including rhino horn and ivory, are re-invested into conservation measures through dedicated environmental funds, including the Game Products Trust Fund and the Environmental Investment Fund.

This income has funded a programme to relocate over 10,000 head of wildlife from state protected areas to communal conservancies and offset costs to rural communities for losses resulting from conflict between humans and wildlife.

Shifeta raised concerns in Mexico that the increasing anti-trophy hunting pressure and general international



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The leaders in their fields.

trend away from trophy hunting poses risks to hunting as an integral part of Namibia's conservation strategy and the broader economy. "It is a lifeline for our communities as well as a sector with huge potential for future expansion," Shifeta said.

Annual game counts and surveys are carried out in all regions to inform a strict system of quotas and permits to ensure that all harvesting and use of wildlife is done on a sustainable basis.

In line with the recently endorsed Cancun Declaration, wildlife natural resources are at the centre of a national attempt to implement the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Locally, the generation of fair and equitable sharing of benefits in the wildlife sector motivates the sustainable use of biodiversity that lead to communal and commercial conservation efforts. "It has also incentivized the full involvement and participation of our communities in conservation," Shifeta said.

While local conservation policies are hailed as being among the best in the world, the wildlife sector shows how biodiversity can be main-streamed with productive sectors of the economy – in this case tourism – for improved human and ecological well-being.

Shifeta said his ministry is currently

halfway through the implementation of a second National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan while making contributions to achieve the CBD Global Strategic Plan and its Aichi Targets.

"We continue to review and update them to fit the changing circumstances and needs of our conservation efforts," he said, adding that Namibia has been able to establish an interlinked network of protected areas comprising national parks, community managed conservation areas, freehold wildlife management units, and tourism concession areas for the conservation of biodiversity, which now covers over 45% of the country.

"This network is the key attraction of the country's fast growing tourism sector and it has opened up ecological corridors to promote the free movement of wildlife through different land use systems," he said.

Meanwhile, Shifeta said that over the past 20 years, the development of a strong rights-based legal framework to devolve user rights to communities over wildlife and other natural resources has been of particular interest. This has established a community-based natural resource management network of communal conservancies and community forests, now making up almost half of the total protected areas.

"Within this system of community conservation, tourism based on the sustainable use of wildlife, particularly trophy hunting, is the leading income source for communal conservancies. Trophy hunting, or conservation hunting as we prefer to call it, is a key pillar of our broader approach to the conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources," he commented.

"Without hunting, wildlife will not remain a viable form of land use in rural Namibia, and may be replaced by other forms of land use more damaging to our ecosystems. A recent study estimated that the number of financially profitable conservancies would be drastically reduced if conservancy income from hunting is eliminated. This could trigger the decline of our community-based approach to conservation and lead to increased levels of poverty and an increase in illegal wildlife trade and cases of poaching," he said.

Furthermore, Shifeta said conservation efforts have seen dramatic increases in wildlife numbers on communal land, including species such as elephants, black rhinos and lions, which have re-established strong and viable populations in areas where they had been hunted to the verge of extinction. ■

## Safari Hunting Brings Benefits: Opposing View

By John J. Jackson, III

*Before the African lion was listed as Threatened, the media hammered me for my opinion on the consequences of it being listed. Now that 45 concessions in Tanzania have folded, the Tanzanian wildlife department's revenue has fallen from \$16 million to \$6 million, and nearly 70,000 square kilometers of lion habit in Tanzania are being converted to uses that are unbeneficial to wildlife, and much more, this is my "I told you so!" Following is what I wrote for USA Today and was published in their August 4, 2015 issue. It has all come to pass or is in the processing of occurring.*

**I**f it weren't for regulated hunting in Africa, most African lions would cease to exist.

If the US Fish and Wildlife Service

listed the lion as a "threatened" or "endangered" species, the listing would not provide for critical habitat, recovery programs, cooperative agreements or funding of recovery because the lion is a foreign species.

Instead, listing would require import permits for trophies, which in turn require expensive documentation that is beyond the economic and personnel capacity of most African management authorities. These include repeated nationwide population studies that have long been considered impractical for lions.

Many countries could not bear those added administrative costs. They would have to forgo hunting and the benefits derived from regulated tourist safari hunting. Many lion populations would

perish with the loss of hunting habitat, decline in enforcement and rise in the lion-livestock conflict.

Most lion habitat is in hunting areas that, in aggregate, are larger than national parks. There is no other place for them! A major source of revenue for the operating budgets of wildlife and enforcement authorities is from licensed, regulated tourist safari hunting. A "threatened" listing would raise the cost of safaris, cause the loss of habitat and prey, and upset local residents by taking away their benefits.

Most of the affected countries oppose the US listing. The Fish and Wildlife Service does not consider the costs and benefits of a new listing. But listing of a foreign species raises costs, not benefits.

It fails to provide essential habitat, revenue or community incentives now provided by tourist hunting, as designed by wildlife management experts. Listing is a regulatory measure of last resort with negative effects. It is not equal to or a substitute for hunting as a conservation strategy.

In fact, there is no substitute for hunting's benefits. The lion needs all its habitat, prey, anti-poaching and conservation revenue, and more — not less. Neither photo-tourism nor listing as a threatened species can fill the boots of hunting. ■

### PHASA Presents Coenraad Vermaak Award to President of Conservation Force

The Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA) presented John J. Jackson, III its Coenraad Vermaak Distinguished Service Award at its AGM in November, 2016. Coenraad himself presented the award and stated, "In addition to recent lion and rhino achievements it was for work around the entire world, not just Africa. John is a Life Member of PHASA, and PHASA has been a full supporting member of Conservation Force for 20 years. John was previously presented PHASA's Wildlife Utilization Award in 1994 for elephant conservation leadership."



John J. Jackson, III, (center) with Gray Thornton (left), Kellie Thornton (center right) and Coenraad Vermaak (far right).

## National Geographic Portrays Lions as Savage Beasts

The perception of African lion by some media and some of the public has become an obstacle to its management and survival. Since the Cecil storm, even some lion scientists have tried to commercially capitalize on the growing misperception that wild African lions are much like our pets or fictional Disney Lion Kings. As professional conservationists heavily invested, devoted and committed to saving the lion here at Conservation Force, we have to know the lion and its behavior as surely as we must know its prey base and habitat. Nevertheless we have refrained from expressing what beasts lion are for concern it might be misunderstood. Now National Geographic has let the inconvenient facts out of the bag.

On November 25, 2016 the National Geographic Society's WILD premiered SAVAGE KINGDOM, vividly and noxiously displaying lions as they really are. It is advertised in their monthly magazine as a document showing that "The battles among warring clans play out like GAME OF THRONES- but the royal families are African lions, leopards...and more." It is a mini-series showing more savagery than I can stand but representing what a beast the lion really is. Watch mother lionesses

causally chew their cubs to death while the narrator explains it is not malicious behavior, rather, this is what lions are. They are un-remorseful killers that eat everything, including mothers their cubs, siblings their brothers and they commonly eat their victims, be it a primate or human, alive, part by part.

National Geographic WILD has even published a special book THE SECRET LIFE of PREDATORS highlighting the television mini-series Africa's Savage Kingdom. The article subtitle states, "Think Game of Thrones is the final word on warring dynasties and violent conflict? The Predators of Savuti make the tribes of Westeros look tame. Citing Beverly Joubert/National Geographic Creative, it describes the conflict as "heartless," as "an unapologetic depiction of the aggressive, violent tendencies of big cats..." and "these animals do not possess compassion or empathy." It "shatters any anthroposophical bond you were attempting to build" with the animals being filmed.

The irony and confusion of National Geographic today is the fact that the book is interspersed with articles about common dog and cat pets. What is wrong with these people that no longer

know the difference between house pets, livestock, wild animals and game animals? If hunters and others do not stand fast, the ignorant masses will destroy most wildlife, its habitat and our special relationship with nature and the game they do not know and thus cannot understand.

Permit me to top off this piece of reality by quoting something Professor Craig Packer has said numerous time to various audiences from wildlife ministries to the antis: "Lions were (are) mean, vicious, terrible, horrible, awful animals; local people hated them. Man-eating lions killed more than 100 people a year; cattle killers damaged the livelihoods of thousands of impoverished pastoralists.... Far more land is set aside for trophy hunting than for national parks. Take away the incentive for hunters to grow a healthy crop of lions, and the king of beast would be eliminated from most of its range.... love it or hate it, lions needed trophy hunting as much as trophy hunting needed lions." *Lions in The Balance*, Craig Packer, page 42, *Fools Rush In*. The reality is hunters protect and grow lion populations despite their despicable characteristics. Today the ignorant, misinformed public is becoming the greatest threat to the greatest remaining lion populations. ■

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