



“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**

The Exalted and Exceptional Importance of Big Game Hunting in the 1990s

(A Speech At The Governor’s Hunting Heritage Conference)

One of the chief purposes of Conservation Force is to identify and eliminate the threats to hunting. An underlying misconception that is undermining hunting is the false belief that big game hunting is an anachronism that has lost its popularity. This false propaganda can insidiously affect government policy. The following is the speech I gave at the Governor’s Hunting Heritage Conference in Hershey, Pennsylvania last month. Conservation Force is commissioning a survey and brochure by Southwick Associates, the respected professionals who customarily do surveys for the government agencies themselves. We need contributions for this so hunting can enter the 21st century with the profile it deserves. - John J. Jackson, III.

I am here to correct the misconception about the importance, the place and the status of big game hunting today. By the late 1980s, sport hunting was claimed to be in trouble. Animal extremists misrepresented that it was an anachronism that was no longer needed, no longer wanted, no longer even desirable. As everyone knows who has suffered insults about “Bambi,” big game sport hunting suffered the worst onslaught. Hunters were asked, “How can you do it?” Even some hunters such as bird hunters displayed a negative attitude towards big game hunting. Big game hunting was represented as being “po-

litically incorrect” as well as unpopular. Some no longer perceived hunters



as conservationists. Our public agencies seemed to abandon us. Even to-

day this persists because of the misinformation campaign waged by those with an agenda to undermine the cornerstone of our conservation system. This misperception itself is an insidious threat to hunting because it affects the direction and policy-making of our government agencies.

Well, it’s not true, none of it! Just because animal extremists say hunting is finished and some agencies start believing it and acting like it is true, does not make it true. The one category of hunting that has taken the most abusive criticism is doing the best! Welcome to the 1990s, when the contribution of big game hunting has

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never been larger or more critical; when the number of big game hunters has never been greater and growth in participants is bullish; and when big game hunting has never been more entrenched and assured.

When the 1990s began, little did we know that big game hunting would grow at a pace that exceeds all other categories of hunting, fishing or wildlife watching. Big game hunting is growing at a rate of five percent per annum. That is 9,000 net new hunters per month. This is six times the human population growth rate in the United States (.82 percent per annum, US Department of Commerce). Let me repeat that the number of big game hunters in the US from 1990 through 1995, according to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) 1996 *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Watching*, was six times the human growth rate of this nation. The significance of this growth is further demonstrated when compared with other outdoor recreational activities. For example, wildlife watching has declined again - this time by 17 percent from 1991 to 1995. It declined in each of the past three national surveys (1980 to 1985; 1985 to 1990; and 1990 to 1995). Participation in fishing, small game hunting, waterfowl hunting and wildlife watching have all decreased while big game hunting has increased. Big game hunting stands apart. The fact that it is not widely known, itself, is curious. By anyone's definition big game hunting can not be considered an “unpopular activity” when its growth rate is six times the rate of human growth. There are more licensed big game hunters today than anytime in the history of the world and the growing popularity of the sport is continuous as well as record-breaking. It is not just a flash in the pan. The number of big game hunters has more than tripled since the late 1950s and doubled again since the 1970s.

Those sportsmen are spending more time in the woods than before, 14 days average per individual for a total of 154 million days per annum. The amount of time they are spending in the woods is up 20 percent. Despite

the shorter big game hunting seasons, big game hunters spend more time in the field than all other categories of hunters, saltwater fishermen and even wildlife watchers who have all year to be afield. They are spending more money than ever before. They are more important to our conservation system than they have ever been. In fact, 81 percent of all hunters are big game hunters and that percentage has been growing, too. Thus, they are the largest number of hunters by far and the greatest hunting contributors to our state wildlife department operating budgets.

Instead of being an anachronism, they are indispensable! Instead of being unpopular, their bullish growth is the pace setter and numbers record-breaking. Instead of being politically incorrect, more people than ever before spend more time than ever as big



game hunters because it is fun, it is popular, it is outdoor adventure, it is “in” like never before.

This is not all that those with a different agenda haven't disclosed. You can't have this kind of triumphant wildfire of growth and importance without outward consequences. When the 1990s began, little did we know of the turn of events that has unfolded. The evidence is in the number of magazines with trophy deer heads on their covers at your supermarket stores. It's in the Governor's Heritage Conferences, like this one, that did not begin until the 1990s.

Little did we know that there would be a Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus with 274 members, the largest ad hoc caucus in Congress. The Caucus and its supporting Foundation were only started in 1989. It ensures

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World Conservation Force Bulletin

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that sportsmen have a strong voice in decisions that affect us and the outdoors. It has not lost a vote since its inception.

Little did we know that the anti-long campaign to end hunting on all National Wildlife Refuges, which is 92 million of the nearly 93 million acres administered by the USFWS, would boomerang on them. Instead, the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act was passed, making hunting for the first time a “priority use” of our national refuges - saving hunting on most lands. That put an end to the biggest effort ever made to end your hunting rights. Instead, a proactive law passed both Houses of Congress with only one dissenting vote! (The House voted 407 to 1; the Senate voted unanimously in favor.)

Little did we expect when the 1990s began that sportsmen would reform the Marine Mammal Protection Act to permit the import of polar bear hunting trophies for the first time in 25 years - in effect reversing one of the first and worst losses of our hunting rights. The top biologist in the Northwest Territories states that the increased sport hunting has done more for the bear’s conservation than his lifetime of professional service.

Little did we know when this decade began that the biggest craze in children’s computer games would be *Deer Hunter*. It has sold a million times over and was the number one top seller on the national chart for months. In fact, two hunting computer games have been on the Top 10 list for months. Perhaps this says it all. Big game hunting is fun and is popular and is desirable and is the natural course even on computer!

Little did we know that Congress would finally pass a hunter protection law to make it a federal offense to harass hunters on federal land.

Little did we foresee that CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe, which derives 90 percent of its revenue from big game hunters, would become a model worldwide and foster big game hunting as the principal means of creating incentive for wildlife conservation and operating revenue for wildlife authorities around the world from Pakistan to the

Inuits in the Northwest Territories. Over 300 village communities and nearly a million people are prospering due to sport hunting. Yet, total animal harvest is now less than half of what used to be taken in problem animal control alone. For example, the total number of elephants killed has been halved because they are now a valuable managed resource.

Little did we foresee that land owners in developing countries would take down their fences and join their lands together in conservancies, some as large as Yellowstone National Park, to support the propagation of game animals, wildlife and biodiversity not possible without the revenue and incentive derived from sport hunting.

Little did we foresee that Americans would be spending \$30 million a year to hunt elephant in Africa and that



it would become the hallmark means of perpetuating the long-term survival of elephants outside of parks. This is particularly phenomenal after the anti petitioned to list the elephant as “Endangered” in the late 1980s, which they later admitted they really did to stop sport hunting. Today, elephant trophy import permits are not even required from three countries - Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana.

Little did we know that the white rhino of southern Africa would increase its numbers and be downlisted in large part because of the \$40 million spent directly by US hunters to hunt the rhino, and by the ranchers who have purchased and bred surplus rhinos for that purpose.

We did not anticipate that international sport hunting organizations such as Safari Club International would

double in size and triple in budget in the 1990s or would have hunting conventions with 1,100 booths; or the Elk Foundation would grow by 1,000 percent; or that the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep would sell single sheep tags for more than \$400,000 for “putting sheep back on the mountain.”

Nor could we have imagined the growth in big game resources that this would stimulate. You know of the growth in big game animal numbers. It has kept pace and exceeded expectations. For example, the number of elk and whitetail deer has doubled in little more than a decade. Whitetail have gone from 14 million to 28 to 32 million in little more than a decade, and elk have increased from 400,000 to over a million. Today automobiles annually kill more than twice the number of deer we used to have in the US - 600,000 deer estimated in the first of the century; automobile-kill estimates range up to 1.5 million per year now.

Big game hunting is the status quo. It may be said to be the single biggest economic component of the wildlife conservation infrastructure in the US and thus the world today. It should be known as the existing paradigm, even though some don’t like it or any other use to be made of wildlife. It is important that the role and boom in big game hunting be recognized because the misperception to the contrary is itself a threat that we must affirmatively contend with.

Conservation Force has commissioned Southwick Associates to prepare an attractive brochure with the necessary documentation, which should change for the rest of our lives the underlying misconceptions about big game hunting that threaten hunting. We are looking for partners to complete that task.

We are going to break into the 21st century with big game hunting thriving and being the biggest single component driving our wildlife conservation system today. It should be celebrated, not hidden.

Big game hunting is the most dependable, time-tested and proven conservation development of the entire 20th century. Sport hunting is a \$61

billion per year industry and big game hunting is the largest part of that. It is a higher-order experience that is fulfilling the spiritual, instinctive and recreational needs of more Americans than ever before while it funds our

conservation programs.

It is time that big game hunting again be given the regard it is due and thus hunting itself be regarded more highly. We and conservation agencies must arm ourselves with the facts and

reality as we approach the 21st century. We are entering the 21st century on top of the mountain. Next time you see a big game hunter, thank him or her. You don't have to look far; they are everywhere.

Briefly Noted

People in the News: Donald J. Barry is now the Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. He has moved up from being a legal advisor to the Deputy Assistant Secretary, then to this new position. He will bring a lot of substance to the position.... Jay McAninch has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. He is a biologist with a master's degree in zoology. He has been an eloquent and knowledgeable spokesman for the hunting community for nearly a decade.

Antis Admit Hunting Benefits Deer: The Fund for Animals circulates "Hunting Fact Sheet #2." It states that "...the US deer population has grown from fewer than 500,000 to more than 20 million.... primarily because [of] state wildlife agencies'" management. The objective of the Fund's fact sheet is to attack hunting, but its admissions demonstrate the important biological role hunting can have. It explicitly states that "studies" have documented that deer hunting "causes" the following benefits to deer: 1. Hunting decreases "competition for food" and increases the "nutritional health of deer;" 2. The better nourished deer "have higher productivity;" 3. The hunted deer have "lower neonatal mortality;" 4. Hunting causes "increased conception rates;" and 5. Hunting causes the reproduction rate to "double or triple!" They also admit that buck deer can be hunted without causing a decline in the population by stating that "a single buck can impregnate every doe in the population." This is a contradiction to their frequent claims calling for more expensive studies before any hunting whatsoever is permitted or before

trophies are allowed to be imported. Males are biologically surplus.

Black Bear are Back: At the July Congressional hearing on the proposed Bear Protection Act (S. 263), the tes-



timony of USFWS and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies verified that black bear populations in the US are strong. The bear population was estimated to ex-

ceed 590,000 in the US and Canada. The population is robust and there is no significant impact on it from poaching for commercial trade in any state whatsoever. The bear scare is another fund raising false alarm by the antis that is taking its course like those before it.

Waterfowl Baiting Regulations: The comment period on the baiting regulations has been extended until October 1, 1998. Comments should be directed to the Director of USFWS, PO Box 3247, Arlington, VA 22203-3247. I still believe that an unperceived problem is the proposal that you can't manipulate natural vegetation at any time after the season begins, particularly to make a blind. What is going to be the effect of this on tens of millions of acres of wildlife management areas and national wildlife refuges, where few permanent blinds exist and hunting blinds aren't prepared two weeks before the season?

Lead Shot on Refuges: Lead shot is to be limited in more areas of national wildlife refuges. This includes small game hunters, not just waterfowl hunters. "The Service proposes to revise nontoxic shot provisions for hunting upland game on Waterfowl Production Areas and other areas of the National Wildlife Refuge System," according to the Federal Register Notice, 63 F.R. 40080, July 27, 1998. (Emphasis added.) This means no lead can be in your possession for any game, with the exception of slugs and buckshot for deer and turkey. Some refuges may prohibit lead for deer and turkey as well, according to the Service. It will be unlawful to have lead shot in your possession at all, regardless of the game you are hunting. - John J. Jackson, III.

Conservation Force Sponsor

The *Hunting Report* and Conservation Force would like to thank International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife (IGF) for generously agreeing to pay all of the costs associated with the publishing of this bulletin. IGF was created by Weatherby Award Winner H.I.H Prince Abdorreza of Iran 20 years ago. Initially called The International Foundation for the Conservation of Game, IGF was already promoting sustainable use of wildlife and conservation of biodiversity 15 years before the UN Rio Conference, which brought these matters to widespread public attention. The foundation has agreed to sponsor Conservation Force Bulletin in order to help international hunters keep abreast of hunting-related wildlife news. Conservation Force's John J. Jackson, III is a member of the board of IGF and Bertrand des Clers, its director, is a member of the Board of Directors of Conservation Force.



International Foundation for
the Conservation of Wildlife

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MEMO

September 1, 1998

To: Jim Young, Print N Mail
From: Elaina Panozzo, Oxpecker Enterprises
Re: Print run for September 1998 Conservation Force Supplement

Jim,

Here's the file for the September 1998 issue of the Conservation Force Supplement, to be inserted in the September 1998 issue of The Hunting Report. Don't forget to insert John Jackson's picture on page 2. Please fax 'blue lines' for approval ASAP.

Total print run is 4,150. That includes 3,952 copies for insertion into The Hunting Report (active circulation); and 50 copies to be shipped directly to John Jackson. The remaining 148 copies are to be shipped to us here in Miami. As usual, bill John Jackson for all costs relating to Conservation Force.

Please call if questions.
Elaina