

## Tanzania's Top Hunting Operator Surrenders All Hunting Concessions

Tanzania hunting pioneer family the Pasanisis surrendered all of their tourist hunting blocks in March. They were among the best in the country if not the world. They had no choice after the long period in which most of their clients' prime trophies had been blocked by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). In Eric Pasanisi's words, "We cannot book enough 21-day safaris to make a profit or stay in business without lion and elephant trophy imports into the US. Our losses are escalating so we have to stop... We have gone from 126 safaris per year to less than 20 safaris because of the closure of US elephant and lion trophy imports. This ban forced us in the last three years to withdraw [from] 10 hunting blocks previously, plus 11 blocks this year." The Pasanisis are not alone. Together with other operators 82 blocks have been surrendered and more are expected to follow. The FWS has put them out of business! Conservation Force had advised the FWS that it would come to this if trophy import permitting was not forthcoming. What on earth has the FWS been doing and thinking?

Eric's father, Gerald Pasanisi, has been called the "Father" of the Tanzania hunting industry. He pioneered the hunting sector. His companies have operated since 1974 (44 years) and presently include Tanganyika Wildlife Safari Corp., Bartlette Safaris and Fereck Safaris. He founded the Tanzania Hunting Operators Association (TAHOA), and he or his son led it from inception. Eric recently stepped down as President of TAHOA and resigned his membership. As well as being the longest running operator in Tanzania, the Pasanisis' company has been the biggest in Tanzania and in all of Africa. The family's list of clients, including celebrities, business and



John J. Jackson, III

civic leaders, and others, is unequalled. Many of their clients exclaim their greatest safari was with the Pasanisis, yours truly included. Gerard served as the Consul of Tanzania in France for the last 25 years. He represented the Tanzanian Tourist Corporation (TTC) from the beginning in 1994, then the Tanzania Tourism Corporation (TTB) until 1993. His primary booking agent in the USA had been none other than Bert Klineburger of the Klineburger family and founding board member of Conservation Force. Gerard, and his son Eric in his shoes, spearheaded and funded more anti-poaching activities for decades than anyone that we know. In the early 1990s Tanzania was given the Conservation Country of the Year Award by SCI because of the anti-poaching efforts that saved its elephants and that were initiated by the Pasanisi family.



*Eric Pasanisi (center) headed the largest safari company in Tanzania and was the largest supporter of lion conservation there, providing more than \$500,000 for lion research and over \$2 million for anti-poaching efforts to protect elephant and other species in the Selous Game Reserve. John J. Jackson, III, (left) and Bert Klineberger (right).*

The underlying problem is the growing restrictions on trophy trade. First, the EU started imposing import restrictions on elephant and lion across all of Africa. Although Tanzania satisfied the EU requirements after a

couple of years of documentary proof of enhancement, FWS suspended elephant imports in 2014 then listed lion as threatened in 2015 with a special rule also requiring proof of enhancement. FWS never acted on the same information furnished to the EU or the mountain of other information that was supplied. Neither lion nor elephant today are importable into the USA from Tanzania. This month, we enter the fifth year that elephant are not importable. We are in the third year for lion. Of course, that is far too long. Operators must pay for quotas even if they have no clients and, of course, the operators are required by regulation and by necessity to conduct anti-poaching control at their cost as well.

Conservation Force administratively appealed the Tanzania elephant import permit denials in 2014 with hard evidence that the elephant poaching had peaked and passed in 2011 and the population had stabilized. There were more elephant than were captured in the survey (and the population remains the third largest population in Africa), and the anti-poaching and other benefits of safari hunting were beyond compare anywhere. The anti-poaching benefits from the hunting was also shown to be essential. FWS Director Dan Ashe nonsensically denied the administrative appeal without addressing the very long list of documented enhancement. SCI took the litigation course in federal court in justified outrage for the lack of notice and warning before the suspension, which case was dismissed and is back in court at this time (one of four elephant suits pending today). Conservation Force heaped information on the FWS regarding the status, management and benefits of elephant hunting in Tanzania with too little response from the Service. And now it is too late.

The FWS has been just as slow to issue lion import permits, from anywhere in Africa, since the listing over two years ago. The word "slow" is an understatement. The only

approved lion imports were from South Africa (approximately 10 to 12 wild lions per year) until imports from Zambia and Zimbabwe were approved in October 2017. All have since been withdrawn (see the my report elsewhere in this issue). Even though Tanzania has the largest and most secure lion population in the world, the FWS has ignored the permit applications. The Division of Management Authority neglected to send a letter of inquiry to Tanzania when it sent letters out to the other lion hunting countries in February 2016. (The FWS did not even realize the oversight—we discovered it when the Chief of the Management Authority, Craig Hoover, mentioned to me that there was no response from Tanzania.)

This is not to suggest that the FWS has not had the necessary information. FWS has never before been provided so much information. To document the benefits/enhancement from lion hunting in Tanzania, Conservation Force audited the books of primary hunting operators. We quantified the dollars expended on protecting habitat and prey base and reducing conflict with local people. Those were the three primary threats to the lion cited by the FWS in its threatened listing decision. We literally copied

## Conservation Role of the Pasanisi Family

As well as employing hundreds of cooks, drivers, mechanics and administrative personnel, Eric paid over \$3 million in government taxes from 2012 to 2015. During that same period, he paid more than \$5 million in game fees and hunting permits. He paid for 36 game scouts that made up six teams or anti-poaching squads. Every member of a squad was given a full year's pay by the Pasanisi family when they apprehended a poacher.

Conservation Force's audit documented that Eric stepped up his anti-poaching to 100 game scouts in the Selous to better demonstrate enhancement. In the period immediately following the FWS suspension of elephant trophy imports, he donated 25 Land Rovers (better than his own safari vehicles, and through his foundation) and a plane for anti-poaching. Our audit documented that in three years he contributed over \$2.4 million primarily for anti-poaching vehicles and employment of Selous Game Scouts.

and audited the books to measure the millions of dollars in anti-poaching, Selous retention funds, actual contributions to the communities, etc. All those documents were provided to the FWS.

Tanzania was also the first country to establish a voluntary and then statutory six-year age rule. Every lion trophy taken in Tanzania since then has been aged in a review by independent lion ecologists who did not know the identity of the operator or hunting client.

To this day there has been no FWS movement on permits for Tanzania. All the while the losses to Pasanisi have been building. Without US import of the trophies there were fewer and fewer clients to pay the mandated minimum fees guaranteed to the Wildlife Division for the species on quota and the cost of the blocks, the hundreds of salaries and the overhead. The family was spending more money than it was making, but the FWS ignored my urgent pleas to act on the permits if only to let us know what more was needed for the permitting to be approved. Conservation Force goes to a great deal of trouble to file and support permits, but without feedback there can be no direction or follow through.

The Warden of the Selous provided a strong letter to the FWS that the hunting operators were indispensable to poaching control and the survival of the elephant.

When the Ministry study demonstrated that the elephant poaching and skeletons from the 2011 poaching peak were primarily on the fringe or borders surrounding the Selous, Pasanisi stepped up his community contributions to strategically dissuade the communities from poaching. Human habitation is prohibited in the Selous, which is the largest reserve in Africa at 50,000-plus square kilometers.

Always a leader in funding special conservation projects, Eric Pasanisi funded the most lion work in Tanzania, including contributions to the national carnivore action plan and lion population estimate. Like his father before him, Eric, as the President of TAHOA, championed the practice of hunting only lions aged six years and older. Under his leadership,

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Tanzania was the first country to pass national legislation or regulation mandating a six-year approach. I know because we coordinated it all together. Under his and his father’s leadership,



*Vehicles, airplanes and funding for game scouts are among the donations made by the Pasanisi family and which the Tanzania wildlife department will not be able to replace.*

Tanzania spearheaded the reduction of the country’s lion quotas by half and the actual off-take to less than 50 lions per annum, even though the country has more lion than all the rest of Africa combined. Moreover, Eric funded over \$500,000 in lion work performed by Philippe Chardonnet, including independent aging analysis of lion trophies, schooling of PHs to age lion in the field and at the wildlife college, and lion field population surveys. Eric

did this through safari swaps with the Shikar Safari Club International Foundation. The Foundation provided approximately \$500,000 in lion work over several years in exchange for 21-day safari donations from Pasanisi, who is a professional member of Shikar. Eric Pasanisi did that exchange until his losses grew too large in the last two years. I have never witnessed such a strategic contribution, nor seen anything its equal stymied by the lack of response or acknowledgement by the FWS.

The Pasanisi family also operates the Wildlife Conservation Foundation of Tanzania (WCFT), which has conducted two gala dinners each year, one in Dar Es Salam and the other in Paris, to fund control of poaching. It was founded by former French President Valerie Giscard D’Estang and Gerard Pasanisi. Three former presidents including President Bush Sr. have been patrons. Dallas Safari Club and Conservation Force co-hosted a gala dinner for the Foundation at Gaylord’s in Grapevine, Texas, in October 2006 to fund anti-poaching efforts. (See July and December 2006 Bulletins).

This Bulletin can just note a few recent highlights of the family’s contributions. It is hard to believe it is

over or that the Selous is vulnerable and open after so much work. The reality of what the area and the game there face is well depicted in the video The Game’s Uncertain Future, produced by the DSC Foundation (see @thedsfoundation on Facebook).



*Three US presidents patronized the Wildlife Conservation Foundation of Tanzania, co-founded by Gerard Pasanisi. Here US President George Bush, Sr. and First Lady Barbara Bush (center) attend a foundation gala with Gerard and his wife Jeanine (on the right), and Eric Pasanisi (far left).*

There is reason to fear that the Selous may not survive as we hunters know it. Construction of highways, dams, and mines are more likely to follow the people, cattle and snares that will immediately overtake the Selous. Regardless, the Selous has lost its best friend and benefactor, the Pasanisi family.

## Do Not Be Confused by Media False “Facts” about Trophy Import Permitting

In the race to attack President Trump and big game hunting, the general media and others have the facts all wrong. No elephant trophy import permit applications have been approved from anywhere at all. In fact, at this writing no elephant import permits are in the process of approval from anywhere. Until President Trump indicates his approval, all elephant imports are in limbo. When and if the President allows, enhancement permitting will follow a new process or procedure that is found acceptable by the courts under the Administrative Procedures Act.

The “new” application-by-application procedure is not really new. It is the procedure that has been used for most trophy determinations. In the case of elephant that were down listed to CITES Appendix II, and to “vulnerable” by IUCN, the FWS expedited the permit processing by making a countrywide enhancement determination for a

year or more in advance. The court in the recent SCI/NRA case has held a prospective countrywide enhancement finding requires a full rule making process. That ruling is what has prompted the FWS to do away with countrywide findings and to go back to permit-by-permit decisions. The FWS was concerned that full rulemakings would take at least a year to prepare, take comments and respond to the comments received. The FWS believes making an individual enhancement determination for each permit application received will be more efficient than trying to go through this public process.

All prior enhancement determinations made on a “countrywide” basis have been “withdrawn.” There were 17 country by country enhancement determinations revoked by the FWS to comply with the court opinion in the SCI/NRA case. Trump had nothing to do with the withdrawals

but is most certainly holding up processing elephant permits from the finest and most successful programs.

The district court’s decision will impact the two suits filed by anti-hunting organizations to enjoin the positive enhancement findings for elephant and lion and thus stop the 2016, 2017 and 2018 import permits for Zimbabwe lion and elephant trophies. Those organizations are relying upon the SCI/NRA case as proof the procedure used by the FWS was illegal. Conservation Force had prepared an extensive intervention on behalf of most parties in interest, but we are now awaiting the outcome of the court’s decision with respect to application-by-application enhancement findings. If the court accepts that the FWS can withdraw its prior countrywide findings, negative and positive, then there will be nothing to defend. It is likely the suits will simply be dismissed.

The positive enhancement determinations for lion imports

from RSA, Zambia (it was never suspended, just closed by itself) and Zimbabwe are all withdrawn. All elephant and bontebok enhancement findings were also withdrawn by the FWS. No trophies for lion, elephant, or bontebok are currently

importable. Permits cannot be issued until the underlying enhancement determinations are made on a legally acceptable basis. Hopefully the court will accept the permit-by-permit basis, but rest assured the anti-hunters are already preparing to

challenge that traditional procedure too.

More next month after the last round of legal briefs and the court final judgment.

## New Import Permit Application Forms are Live

The FWS has finally posted the new application forms for import permits. This means the prior forms can no longer be used. The FWS has done away with the special form for elephant trophy imports. Elephant have been merged in the general form for all species requiring proof of enhancement (or non-detriment). As we explained in an earlier Bulletin, the questions on the new forms differ somewhat from the prior versions.

Hunters will typically use four forms. First, form number 3-200-19 is only for leopard trophies (from all countries) and white rhino trophies from Namibia. The FWS uses a special form for these two species that are processed by different staff, because no enhancement findings are required for their import.

Almost all other trophies, including elephant, lion and CITES Appendix I-listed species, will go on form 3-200-20. The title of this form is “IMPORT OF SPORT-HUNTED TROPHIES (Appendix I of CITES and/or ESA).” The same form may be used for more than one species if hunted on the same trip as long as they are being imported together.

Argali trophy imports have their own special form, 3-200-21. Similarly, bontebok trophy imports have a special form, 3-200-22.

Although there are different forms, the basic structure and questions are the same. The first page of each looks like the prior versions. It requests the hunter’s name, phone, email and address. However, the FWS no longer requests social security numbers. The FWS also no longer asks if the applicant has received a prior import permit and



its number, which will save applicants from digging out old files.

On the subsequent pages, the order of questions on the new forms has changed from the prior versions. The forms no longer begin by asking about the trophy. Instead, they ask for additional mailing instructions, who to contact with questions, and if the hunter has been convicted of certain wildlife-related offenses. In questions 4 through 6, the permit finally requests the species’ name, location and dates of the hunt, and current location of the trophy if already hunted. Thankfully, the forms no longer ask which parts will be imported.

The forms request three new pieces of information about the hunt: (1) the name of the hunting operator or PH; (2) a copy “of any applicable foreign government permits or licenses that were required to remove this animal from the wild (if you have not hunted yet and do not currently hold any such permits or licenses, please indicate so)”;

and (3) enhancement information. Given the FWS’ new procedure of evaluating enhancement permit-by-permit, the following new questions may have greater importance for application approval:

a. Do you have any information regarding the population status or trend data on the species hunted?

New Form	Species
3-200-19	Leopard, White Rhino from Namibia
3-200-20	ESA and CITES Appendix I (Elephant, lion, markhor, wood bison, etc.)
3-200-21	Argali
3-200-22	Bontebok

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