



“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**

□ **Special Focus**

British Columbia Grizzly Bears

The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) is an international protectionist organization located in the United Kingdom. It was one of the principal proponents of listing the African elephant. It has now turned its attention to grizzly bear hunting in British Columbia and is heading a petition drive on the British Columbia government to enact an “immediate moratorium on trophy hunting of grizzly bears.” It claims that the hunting is “shocking and outrageous” and the policy that allows it is “outdated and irresponsible.” The base of its campaign is its false and misleading assessment of the status of the bear in BC. Ray DeMarchi, the immediate past chief of wildlife states that there is a “public campaign underway in

the province and internationally to erode the public’s confidence in BC’s grizzly bear conservation strategy.” “Animal Rights Groups with small, highly organized mem-



berships have joined force with foreign nationals and have developed a plan to discredit the provincial government’s grizzly bear management policies” (hunting). “Through a deliberate program of

speculation, half-truths and outright lies, they have created an atmosphere of uncertainty and concern amongst the public.” At the request of Conservation Force, the three most knowledgeable authorities on grizzly bear in British Columbia prepared the following statement on the true status of the bear and its ability to withstand sport hunting. The authorities are: Raymond A. Demarchi, M.Sc., R. P. Bio. Retired British Columbia Chief of Wildlife Conservation of the British Columbia Wildlife Branch. Duncan, BC Canada; D.R. Halladay, M.Sc., R. P. Bio. Retired Director of the British Columbia Wildlife Branch. Victoria, BC, Canada; and W.T. Munro, M.Sc., R. P. Bio. Retired Deputy Director of the British Columbia Wildlife Branch, Victoria, BC, Canada.

Re: Grizzly Bear Management In British Columbia

Grizzly bear management as practiced in British Columbia is based on sound scientific principles that are set out in: Halladay, D.R and R.A. Demarchi. 1996. *Wildlife Harvest Strategy. Improving British Columbia's Wildlife Harvest Regulations*. Wildlife Program. Victoria, B.C 73pp. The provincial Grizzly Bear Management Plan is established in two publications: 1) Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks. 1995. *A Future For the Grizzly. British Columbia Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy*. Victoria, BC 15 pp.; and 2) Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks. 1995. *Conservation of Grizzly Bears in British Columbia: A Background Report*. Victoria, BC 70 pp. In 1990-91 the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in

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Canada (COSEWIC) undertook a review of the status of the grizzly bear in Canada. The conclusions were that while grizzlies had been extirpated in much of their range and while over 60 percent of the remaining habitat in Canada was designated as either vulnerable or threatened, British Columbia still supported between 10,000 and 13,000 bears or 25 percent of the North American population and at least 50 percent of the Canadian population. The review determined that at least 60 percent of the estimated population of bears which existed before colonization of the province remain in viable, huntable populations. (Banci, V. 1991. *The Status of Grizzly Bears in Canada*. COSEWIC, Ottawa, ON. 171 pp. And Banci, V., D.A. Demarchi, and W.R. Archibald. 1994. *Evaluation of the population status of Grizzly Bears in Canada*. International Conference on

Bear Research and Management. Victoria, BC.) The decimation and extirpation of grizzly bears which occurred in the Western US, the Canadian prairies, and in localized areas in British Columbia, (i.e. the Lower Mainland and Okanagan Regions and the Peace River Lowlands), occurred between 100 and 150 years ago and was the direct result of occupation and settlement of grizzly bear habitat, intensive agricultural development, cattle and sheep ranching, unregulated commercial hunting and predator control. Grizzly bears were commercially hunted and trapped in British Columbia until the early 1900s. Native peoples killed grizzly bears in self defense and for ceremonial purposes, and their effectiveness as grizzly bear hunters may have been greater than previously believed (Kay, C.E. 1994. *Aboriginal Overkill: The Role of Native Americans in Structuring Western Ecosystems*. Human Nature 5:359-398.). Unlike much of the Western US, most of British Columbia’s grizzly bear habitat is not suitable for settlement or intensive agriculture, and cattle ranching is confined largely to the drier portions of the Central and Southern Interior and the Peace River Lowlands. British Columbia is a highly mountainous province with less than four percent considered arable. Grizzly bears never occurred historically on the large coastal islands or the coastal plain. At present, more than two-thirds of the province’s mainland, an area of over 350,000 square miles, remains as productive grizzly bear habitat. This vast area is continuous with viable grizzly bear habitats in Alaska, Yukon, Northwest Territory, Alberta, Montana and Idaho; all but the latter support viable, huntable populations of grizzly bears although the season is presently closed in Montana. (A. Dood, pers. comm.) Grizzly bears have been continuously hunted by recreational sporthunters throughout most of their range in the province for at least 150 years. Grizzly bear populations which were locally

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“Serving The Hunter Who Travels”

overhunted have undergone a rapid recovery during the past 30 years in response to the imposition of conservative hunting regulations beginning in the mid to late 1960s. By 1968, hunting with the use of bait was prohibited; seasons in the southern two-thirds of the interior of the province were either closed or opened only during the spring; and females with young and their young were protected by law. By 1996, all grizzly bear hunting in the province by residents was regulated by Limited Entry Hunting, and all hunting by non-residents was regulated under government administered quotas issued to licensed guide-outfitters. Where the habitat remains suitable, all or nearly all grizzly populations have fully recovered to their historic levels. For the most part, this recovery occurred while most areas remain open to carefully regulated annual hunting seasons. Currently, grizzly bear populations in areas such as the Kootenay Region and the Northern Rockies are at recent highs. The population in the southeastern portion of the province (i.e. the Southern Rockies in the East Kootenay), which is shared between Alberta and Montana, has been hunted continuously by non-natives for nearly 200 years and by aboriginal peoples since early occupation. An intensive independent 20-year research program conducted by Dr. Bruce McLellan has determined that this grizzly bear population has been increasing during the 1980s and 1990s at the rate of eight percent per year. In addition, an intensive program of bear-proofing community garbage dumps in key problem areas has significantly reduced the need for agency control of garbage-conditioned grizzly bears which during the early to mid-1990s resulted in the removal of between 25 and 50 grizzly bears per year. Essentially, the British Columbia Wildlife Branch employs three independent methods for estimating grizzly bear populations. These are: 1) the Fuhr-Demarchi grizzly bear habitat suitability determination method (Fuhr, B.L., and D.A. Demarchi. 1990. *A Methodology for Grizzly Bear Habitat Assessment in British Columbia.*

Wildlife Bulletin B-67. Ministry of Environment, Wildlife Branch, Victoria, BC 28 pp.); 2) population models based on an assessment of biological information collected from compulsory resident hunter and guided-hunt returns and; 3) independent grizzly bear field inventories and research. In the past three years, the province of British Columbia initiated a major grizzly bear inventory program employing a non-intrusive hair sampling/DNA analysis technique plus several on-going radio tagging studies. These and other inventories have shown that in nearly all instances, grizzly bear populations are near or, in many instances, above previous estimates. In addition to the professional provincial government biologists employed in the Ministry of Environment, the province has established a



scientific panel of 11 grizzly bear researchers and specialists from academia, government and non-government organizations from Alberta, British Columbia and the US. The main responsibility of the scientific panel is to provide the government with an objective assessment of the progress of the implementation of the Provincial Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy. In their latest assessment, hunting management was given a C+ grade. Contrary to claims by certain anti-bear-hunting NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), all ecosystems shared with Washington and Idaho and all but one shared with Montana where grizzly bear numbers are at record highs have been closed to hunting, some for nearly 40 years. These areas have been closed as part of the cooperative grizzly bear man-

agement and recovery efforts which have been ongoing with the various state and federal wildlife agencies in the US for at least three decades. All wildlife management units in the province where bear populations have been determined by the British Columbia Wildlife Branch to be below the Wildlife Branch's expected threshold or where hunting has been shown to be excessive over a period of three years are closed to hunting. Those management units which remain open to hunting are strictly controlled and closely monitored by limited entry hunting seasons; nearly all hunting in the southern, more developed regions is restricted to the spring months, which provides the maximum protection to females and their young; females and their young are protected by regulation and all bear hunting is administered under strict quotas for guided

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non-residents. All bears killed in the province whether by legal hunting, nuisance animal control or for self defense must be submitted to an office of the Ministry of Environment for inspection under the Compulsory Inspection Regulations. In addition to these inspected bears, a built-in “safety factor” of 25 percent is included in the calculations of the annual allowable harvest. The reproductive performance of grizzly bears, while comparatively low on an annual per-female basis, is comparable to most large mammals on a female per life-time basis. Where grizzlies lack in productivity they compensate in high survival and longevity. Productivity in grizzly bear populations studied in the province vary from about four percent per annum in marginal habitats to over eight percent in the most productive areas. Harvest rates are set at the low end of the scale with

built-in safety factors of a required minimum two-thirds males in the harvest. The inclusion of all known sources of mortality including problem animal kills, animals killed in defense of life and property and the legal hunter take, plus the assumption of 25 percent “unaccounted” mortality are accounted for in the annual calculations of the allowable harvest. The wildlife program also uses the

minimum rather than the maximum or median population estimates in the calculation of the allowable harvest which adds a conservative factor to the calculations. We believe that sport-hunting as it is currently practiced in British Columbia does not threaten any grizzly bear population. It is our opinion that grizzly bear populations continue to thrive and are not endangered or threatened in any areas of

British Columbia where hunting is allowed. Moreover, the British Columbia Wildlife Branch is developing recovery programs that are underway in areas where bear populations are considered to be below carrying capacity although opportunities for recovery in such areas are limited because of their use as livestock range, heavy use for back-country recreation and their close proximity to settlements.

Briefly Noted

Ontario Bear Update: Many in the hunting community have come to realize that the closure of spring black bear hunting was only a proposal which by law had to be published and had to undergo a public review process. At this writing, it is entirely possible that the season will remain open, at least in part because of the many comments that were filed by interested parties. Conservation Force has been on top of the issue from day one and has assisted in the drafting of many hundreds of these comments from management authorities, supporting organizations and individuals. We are glad to be playing a small part in an enormous effort by everyone to save this hunting. Insiders say the decision is too close to call at this point, but even if the season is closed, there is a good chance it will be reopened some time in the future. One problem with the closure is the dramatically increased number of bears that will be produced in the province, at least some of which are sure to become problem animals. In anticipation of the problem, the Minister is considering an expansion of the fall bear hunt. As all of this works its way through the government, persons wishing to make donations should send them to the people who need it, The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Hunting and Fishing Heritage Fund, PO Box 2800, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 8L5.

Kyrgyz Republic Argali: The Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Kyrgyz Republic completed its Argali status report early this year. Unfortu-

nately, that does not mean the US Fish and Wildlife Service has speeded up its own import determination. At this writing, with hunting convention and therefore prime hunt-booking season almost over, US hunters are still waiting for final word on how many Argali will be allowed in the country. The Kyrgyz ministry reports a slight increase in the Argali population over the past three years and says that it was stable before that. Resident hunting is prohibited. Each hunting area is guarded year round. Wolves are taking the most Argali, and wolf numbers are reported to have doubled. The Argali hunting quota for 1999 is 40, which is approximately three percent

of the total number of male Argali and .4 of the population. The hunting quota is less than 10 percent of the males of trophy age. There is no doubt that international sport-hunting is providing the incentive for the sheep’s conservation, as well as the management revenue. Hunting in this case is truly a “force for conservation.” It must also be begrudgingly admitted that the uplisting of this animal to “threatened” status is what inspired its improved management. On the other hand, if the USF&WS had listed the sheep as “endangered” instead of “threatened” (which it almost did), then the status of the sheep would have surely deteriorated through poaching, predation, competition with domestic animals and loss of revenue and incentive. Incidentally, had the hunting community persisted and won the Argali lawsuit, the USF&WS was going to respond by listing it as endangered. This is partially why the Argali suit was dropped at my recommendation.

Roosevelt Sable: The Roosevelt sable that was thought only to exist in Kenya also extends down through the entire Eastern half of Tanzania. Dr. Rolf Baldus of the IUCN Antelope Specialist Group reports that DNA studies and aerial surveys of October 1998 have demonstrated that there are 3,900 of the sable in the Selous Game Reserve and approximately 6,700 outside of the reserve, particularly in the Southeast. He reports that the DNA samples are coming “from safari companies which have generously supported the research.” - *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

MEMO

To: Jim Young, Print N Mail
From: Nilton Aquino, The Hunting Report
Re: Print run for March 1999 Issue of Conservation Force Supplement
Date: March 5, 1998

Jim,

Here's the March 1999 issue of the Conservation Force Supplement, to be inserted in the March 1999 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 4,240. That includes 4,046 copies for insertion into The Hunting Report (active circulation); and 50 copies to be shipped directly to John Jackson. The remaining 144 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.

Nilton