



*"Hunting provides the principal incentive and revenue for conservation.  
Hence it is a force for conservation."*

# World Conservation Force Bulletin

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

## The Measure of Safari Hunting's Positive Impact upon Communities – More than the Media Reports

In September's *Bulletin*, we dispelled some myths parroted by the media following the hunt of "Cecil the lion." We return to one of those, the "3% myth" that keeps getting repeated. The harvest of a 120x2 (unnamed) elephant in Zimbabwe's Malipati Safari Area drew media coverage that again misrepresented the 3% figure to report that African communities do not benefit from safari hunting programs. However, the figure is wholly incorrect. Communities tangibly benefit far more from sustainable use. We revisit the issue in greater depth because of the relevance of community participation and benefits in this instance and the obvious need to expand upon the explanation of community benefits.

### Benefits of Elephant Hunting in the Malipati Safari Area

Why are community benefits particularly relevant here? Because the Malipati Safari Area where the monster bull was taken is leased to the Chiredzi CAMPFIRE Rural District Council. CAMPFIRE is Zimbabwe's community-based natural resources management program. It covers approximately 50,000 km<sup>2</sup> (12% of the country), 777,000 households, and 2.4 million children. The Chiredzi District is only one of the 58 Districts in the Program. The Chiredzi District includes approximately 5,800 households. The CAMPFIRE Program normally captures 100% of the game fee revenue paid by the hunting client but Chiredzi receives more. For example, in 2014 the Chiredzi District received over \$290,000 in income from elephant hunting alone – even though they were unable to utilize a third of their quota due to the impact of the USFWS import



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ban.<sup>1</sup> This was just the community's direct share. Of course, that is more than 3%.

The Chiredzi Rural District Council (RDC) and individual wards receive income from two sources. They receive it through their lease and sublease of the Malipati Safari Area. The RDC leases the Malipati from the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA). PWMA assigns specific quotas to the area and charges trophy and license fees that are split with the RDC. In 2014, the quota was 6 elephant. The RDC then sub-leases the area, passing the charges through to the operator for the client to pay. The current sublessor is Nixon Dzingai, the black Zimbabwean operator who led the hunt of the 120-pounder. They are known for their big bulls.

Although PWMA charges trophy and license fees, it then splits that fee income on a 50-50 basis with the District communities. All the fees, lease payments, and income received by the RDC is distributed according to CAMPFIRE guidelines, which require that at least 55% of income go to the individual wards, 15% and 26% go to the RDC (for administrative costs and community projects, respectively), and 4% go to the CAMPFIRE Association for its services to the

program.

In the normal arrangement the RDC is the landowner rather than lessee, thus leases its own land to safari hunting operators. Being the landowner, it can tender the land and add to the fees to be paid. It can negotiate a premium trophy fee for large-tusked elephant. All income received is distributed according to the same guidelines: at least 55% goes directly to individual wards, with the balance of 41% going to the RDC and a 4% levy going to the CAMPFIRE Association.

Income paid to the Council and CAMPFIRE Association also benefits the wards because it is plowed back into infrastructure projects, anti-poaching, and other community-wide uses, and is used by the Association to represent the communities internationally. Examples of projects funded by hunting revenue in the Chiredzi District include purchase of seven vehicles, electrification of



A classroom built with funds from hunting programs

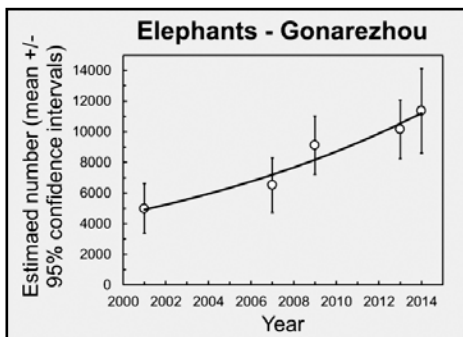
five schools and six business centers, construction of ten 2x2 classroom blocks, five schools, and a clinic, and purchase of goats and cattle for five villages, among other things.

Hunting operators in CAMPFIRE Districts also contribute to community projects, over-and-above their concession agreements. They provide meat, building supplies, transportation, and other goods and services not

1. CAMPFIRE Association, *Update on Chiredzi Rural District Council CAMPFIRE 2014 Income: Trophy Fees, Concession Fees, & Daily Rates* (Oct. 2015). Additional information about the benefits to CAMPFIRE from tourist safari hunting is available at [www.vimeo.com/user17366897/review/116473289/88ae4be861](http://www.vimeo.com/user17366897/review/116473289/88ae4be861).

necessarily reflected on any income and expense statement. For instance, in 2014 Mr. Dzingai separately donated to the construction of a 2x2 classroom block and provided a large quantity of meat to villages. Thus, the total benefits to communities in the Chiredzi District include contractual payments, voluntary donations, employment, and services from local operators – all of which improve the quality of life and tolerance of wildlife conflicts.

Is it any wonder then that elephant populations in the area have steadily increased for decades, to the current all-time high in Gonarezhou National Park? (See graph.) Studies and the most recent aerial survey found poaching levels in the area to be low – there were no fresh or recent carcasses observed in the most recent survey.<sup>2</sup> These results suggest the local people are content and willing to accept the presence of so many elephant because of the tangible benefits they provide through sustainable hunting. (As well as misrepresenting the community income share, the media and antis wholly misrepresent that there is runaway elephant poaching in the area of the hunt.)



Source: Preliminary Results of 2014 Aerial Survey

CNN announced there was a “media storm” about the big elephant, which was half true. Half true because CNN is media, but the story was a non-starter. The animal rights groups, starting with Johnny Rodrigues of the Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force,

2. See, e.g., K.M. Dunham et al., *Aerial Survey of Elephants & Other Large Herbivores in Gonarezhou National Park & Save Valley Conservancy: 2014* (Mar. 2015); Conservation Force, *Comment Opposing Negative Enhancement Finding* (Oct. 16, 2014) (citing E. Gandiwa et al., *21 Journal for Nature Conservation* 133-42 (2013), and other documents).

announced a campaign to destroy the German hunter who lawfully took the elephant. Nevertheless, this story has not gotten traction like Cecil. Our guess is the media will not choose to go on campaigns to “destroy” people as pawns of the animal extremists. If they do, there are legal remedies that will bite them in short order.

The original figure of 3.1% was taken from a 2010 CIC/FAO study.<sup>3</sup> This study was not evaluating community benefits, but the hunting sector’s contribution to national economies. The figure was one line-item on a “guesstimate” of a “hypothetical” safari operator’s income and expense statement in Tanzania. The calculation was based on confidential information from operators who were not based in community areas, during a period before reforms to CBNRM regulations increased revenue sharing between operators and communities in Tanzania. Most importantly, the information was specific to Tanzania and was the operators’ gratuitous donations to community outreach above fees, concession payments, etc. It was just an extra sum, not the total benefits.

Despite these limitations, a 2013 report by an economists-for-hire NGO<sup>4</sup> took this one line-item and drew a continental conclusion about all the revenue distribution to communities. The report includes no caveats, even though it is essentially creating a statistic out of thin air! (It should be no surprise that the 2013 report was commissioned by HSUS, IFAW, and Born Free Foundation.)

No one has tried to calculate the percentage of hunting revenue that goes to communities on a continental basis – probably because each country and location is different. Most communities in Africa earn income from safari hunting by receiving a percentage of the game fees, and additionally by leasing their land as concessions and charging other fees. But countries

3. V.R. Booth, *The Contribution of Hunting Tourism: How Significant Is this to National Economies?* (July 2010).

4. R. Campbell/Economists at Large, *The \$200 Million Question: How Much Does Trophy Hunting Really Contribute to African Communities?* (2013).



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(and regions within countries) have different revenue-sharing regulations, percentages, and fee structures.

Communities in Tanzania are now tangibly benefiting from safari hunting well in excess of 3%. In 2012,<sup>5</sup> Wildlife Management Area (WMA) benefits-sharing guidelines were amended to require that 75% of block fees, 45% of conservation, game, and observers fees, and 15% of permit fees be distributed to the communities.<sup>6</sup> This motivated additional communities to apply for gazettement as WMAs. And it caused the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) to estimate: "In total the WMAs get around 60-65% of the total hunting revenue accrued in the WMA."<sup>7</sup> In 2015 the MNRT increased revenue-sharing even more, to 75% of block fees, 70% of conservation, permit, and observers fees, and 65% of game fees.<sup>8</sup> This is substantial transfer of hunting revenues to communities. The greater sharing of permit fees is especially incentivizing, as it gives each individual animal real value to local residents. Since 2012, Tanzania has gone from limited benefits to a much greater percentage share for WMAs. And this does not include the gratuitous donations from operators and clients and other extras like employment, meat, etc.

In Zimbabwe and Namibia, communities are devolved full authority over use of wildlife on their land. The community programs receive 100% of license and other fees. They negotiate their own contracts, and a "competitive market and optimal value" for a concession is achieved through the tender process.<sup>9</sup> Through the bargaining power they receive from tender, communities can ensure



*Hunting revenues are used to pay teachers.*

they receive a fair and significant share of income generated above the game fees.<sup>10</sup> And they do. For example, in 2013 Namibian communities received N\$20,968,823 in cash returns from safari hunting in addition to N\$6,260,112 in the value of meat from safari hunting.<sup>11</sup> In Zimbabwe, one operator estimated that 2015 payments and salaries to the local CAMPFIRE Program were almost 40% of its gross sales.<sup>12</sup>

In Zambia, communities split trophy fee revenue from safari hunting in Game Management Areas "50-50" with the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA). ZAWA estimated that utilization of Zambia's 2015 quota (a conservative 36 elephant) would provide approximately \$500,000 in "crucial revenue" for the authority and the communities. When Zambia imposed a hunting moratorium in 2013, human-wildlife conflicts (human deaths and PAC offtake) increased,<sup>13</sup>

10. Note that "many over-estimate the importance of money when decisions are made about the award of trophy hunting contracts." Communities may turn down the highest bidder in favor of an operator with whom they expect a more constructive and respectful partnership. *Id.*

11. This total (N\$ 27228935) compares favorably to the value of returns generated by joint-venture tourism (N\$ 29,272,088) and does not include own-use game harvesting or shoot-and-sell consumptive use. NACSO, *The State of Community Conservation in Namibia – A Review of Communal Conservancies, Community Forests & Other CBNRM Initiatives* (2014).

12. This percentage is likely even higher, as it does not include game fee payments made by the client that go to the government (essentially pass-through payments and not really "income" to the operator). Zimbabwe Safari Operator, pers. comm. (2015).

13. ZAWA, *Enhancement & Non Detriment Findings for African Elephant in Zambia* (Mar.

and the communities complained – causing the government to change position and reopen the hunting.<sup>14</sup> This highlights the recognized importance of hunting to Zambia's communities.

And in Mozambique, communities receive 20% of license, trophy, and concession fees. In the Tchuma Tchato area, there is a special arrangement and the community receives 33% of these fees.<sup>15</sup> That minimum percentage does not include the employment, meat, and client and operator gifts and contributions.

Communities benefit in ways that do not make an income statement. As in the Chiredzi District and as encouraged (or required) by government regulation or concession agreements, most operators make substantial voluntary contributions of meat, goods, and services to communities, above those required by contract. These contributions serve to incentivize cooperation as well as tolerance of wildlife conflict. Hunting clients make similar donations over and above the fees. Operators also employ community members, purchase goods from community producers, and control problem animals. All of these are expenditures of hunting revenue and resources in communities that create millions of dollars of community benefits. We have previously described these benefits in detail,<sup>16</sup> but a few more examples follow:

- Individual operator contributions to communities are generous. Recent data from the Robin Hurt Wildlife Foundation in Tanzania details contributions of almost \$1.8 million toward health and wellness, village benefits and governance, education, water and more from 2006-mid-2015.<sup>17</sup> This does not include the \$1.1

2015); ZAWA, pers. comm. (Aug. 2015).

14. C. Mfula, *Cecil Stirs World, But Africans See Two Sides of Hunting Debate*, *Times of Zambia* (Aug. 16, 2015).

15. Mozambique, *Press Release & Speech by Minister* (2015); Dr. F. Parietal, pers. comm. (Nov. 2015).

16. *World Conservation Force Bulletin* (Oct. 2014).

17. Robin Hurt Wildlife Foundation, *Contribution to Community Development Activities: 2006 to June 2015* (2015).

5. This amendment came after the Booth study cited above, but occurred before publication of the Economists At Large report.

6. WWF-Tanzania, *Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas 2012 Status Report* (2013).

7. Tanzania MNRT, *Comment on ESA Status Review of African Lion* (Jan. 27, 2015).

8. Tanzania MNRT, *Declarations & Directives during a Dialogue Workshop* (July 2-3 2015).

9. L. Chris Weaver et al., *Achievements & Practical Lessons Learned from a Decade of Wildlife Utilization in Namibia's Communal Area Conservancies* (2009).

million spent in this period on anti-poaching and conservation. And that is just one operator!

- One safari operator in Zimbabwe reported its 2015 contributions of over \$330,000 to the local CAMPFIRE District.<sup>18</sup> This includes payments of gamefees to the RDC, producer wards, and the CAMPFIRE Association. However, it also includes \$67,500 in voluntary project spending, above any contractual obligations. And it does not include the value of meat, PAC, anti-poaching support – projected to exceed \$80,000 in 2015 – employment, transport, and other benefits to the communities. The amounts paid to CAMPFIRE were greatly reduced due to the USFWS import suspension, but the hunting revenue generated still provides 90% of revenue to the District. And the overall impact of the benefits-sharing system has contributed to the decline of poaching in the area, from 40 elephant carcasses in 2010 to only 3 in 2015 to date. (This decrease is also attributable to their anti-poaching Unit, a team of scouts coordinated and co-funded with the CAMPFIRE District.)
- In Zambia before the 2013 hunting ban, communities received in excess of 6,000 kg in game meat distributions annually (as required by government regulation).<sup>19</sup> This is a highly valued commodity in systems where wildlife belongs to the state, native hunting is limited, livestock husbandry is costly and rangeland is poor, and purchased meat is prohibitively expensive.
- In Mozambique, annual operator reports on file show that even small

18 Zimbabwe Safari Operator, pers. comm. (2015).

19 P. White & J.L. Belant, *Provisioning of Game Meat to Rural Communities as a Benefit of Sport Hunting in Zambia*, PLoS ONE 10(2) (Feb. 18, 2015).

hunting operations can support dozens of families (37), provide seeds and training for locals in sustainable agriculture, donate books to the local school and team uniforms and transport for the local soccer club, conduct anti-poaching patrols, chase away rogue elephant, provide fresh meat from successful hunts, and otherwise give value to wildlife in a country with limited assets.<sup>20</sup>

- Last but not least, a recent study on the benefits of hunting and photo-tourism in Namibia’s communal conservancies concluded that hunting generates similar benefit levels as photo-tourism, and both are “essential” to successful CBNRM in Namibia.<sup>21</sup> This study evaluated annual reports from 77 communal conservancies and found that the benefits of safari hunting more often accrue to the community at large, funding most of the conservancy’s operational costs and community projects, while the benefits of photo-tourism are primarily individual in the form of jobs and wages. This study calculated that a hunting ban would cause 58% of current conservancies to be unable to pay their operating costs from generated revenue. At the same time, if photo-tourism was eliminated only 15% of conservancies would have to close

20 Mozambique Safari Hunting Operators, *Annual Reports* (for 2014 season) (pers. comm.).

21 R. Naidoo et al., *Tourism & Hunting Provide Complementary Benefits to Communal Conservancies in Namibia*, *Conservation Biology* (2015).

their doors. Clearly, conservancies in Namibia – and the more than 170,000 people who are part of them – benefit significantly from hunting.

These are real examples of the communities realizing benefits from sustainable use-based hunting. In a recent *New York Times* article,<sup>22</sup> residents of a remote village in Botswana lamented the 2014 ban. As one resident stated, “Now we don’t eat meat anymore.” Whether or not Western journalists and economists-for-hire appreciate the simple value of protein, the communities do. Their voices should be heard, and their appreciation of and support for the sustainable use paradigm should be credited – far more than a made up “3%” figure.



At least 55% of hunting income from CAMPFIRE goes to individual wards in Zimbabwean communities.

And let’s not forget – the percentage of a hunting operator’s revenue that is paid to the community is a side issue. The operator can pay no more than the hunting client pays him. The client is the source of everyone’s benefits (including the government’s). Some are direct and some indirect, but the client is the source. It is the client that pays it all and everyone. This article addresses the total contribution to the community from the regulated hunting activity, not just one part of one component out of context. More to come in the future because the community component of hunter-based conservation is a hallmark of Conservation Force and the base of most of its signature projects around the globe. ■

22 N. Onishi, *A Hunting Ban Saps a Village’s Livelihood*, *New York Times* (Sept. 12, 2015).

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