

## Cherry Picking

I am in Southern Africa as I write this during my annual attendance at PH and Operator association AGMs. I seldom get to pass on all the wisdom and information arising from nearly thirty years of such trips. This year I have sort of "cherry picked" one of the many interesting presentations, one given by Danene Westhuyzen, the Dangerous Game PH who is President of the Namibian Professional Hunters Association. This is a presentation made by Danene before the 45th AGM of NAPHA. She was also reelected to serve a second two year term as President. Conservation Force works very closely with Danene, who is an extremely competent leader of the community across Africa.

### NAPHA ADDRESS

Ladies & Gentlemen,

The Namibia Professional Hunting Association marked its 45th year of existence in 2018. It is an achievement to be proud of. I know of no other

African hunting association that has reached such a significant milestone.

NAPHA's milestone is important because it speaks of our history, reminds us why we live the way we do and why we are where we are. It also reminds us to learn from mistakes and strive to become better. It helps us understand how people and societies behave. The past causes the present, and thus the future. Furthermore, history contributes to moral understanding, but more importantly, it shapes our identity.

Namibia's history includes a broad repertoire of skills and interests,



**John J. Jackson, III**

cultivated over years of evolution, and the concurrent shaping of culture.

In Namibia hunting is an integral part of a successful conservation model which benefits communities, wildlife and natural ecosystems. Twenty years ago Namibia's total population was 1.65 million people, with a density of 2.01 persons per square km. Today, our population stands at 2.58 million people with a projected 3.68 million people by 2038.

Namibia is a country that still offers the marvelous wide open spaces and habitats for all species to roam freely. But more importantly it has proven beyond any doubt that its conservation efforts for all game species through responsible hunting. Despite the growth of our human population, our elephant population has increased from 7000 to 23,500 over the last 20 years, the lion population in the northwest has increased from 20 to 150. We have the world's largest free roaming populations of cheetah and black rhino, and well over 70% of Namibia is under one or other form of conservation management. This makes for one of the world's largest contiguous areas of protected land. We have more wildlife in Namibia today than at any time in the past 150 years.

Why is it then that the hunting community is facing such extreme pressure globally and on all fronts?

NAPHA, as well as our Ministry of Environment and Tourism, has demonstrated abundantly and with ample merit that conservation through hunting WORKS!

Nevertheless we are faced with international bans on trophy

imports, airline bans and charges on transporting hunting rifles and trophies, extreme social media uproar and aggressive anti-hunting campaigns to the extent of identifying hunters and sending them insulting hate mail and even death threats. The anti-hunting community likes to deceive the world and blames the decline in African wildlife numbers seen in other countries on hunting, but refuses to distinguish between legal hunting and poaching. The anti-hunting proponents don't seem to want to understand that the real Armageddon for wildlife in Africa is the population explosion and the concurrent loss of wildlife habitat.

Not to mention the over-exploitation and growing environmental footprint from over-tourism. An increase in asphalt roads, electricity lines, water usage, mountains of garbage and a never decreasing list of requirements and needs to be met for the tourist wanting to observe game from already worn-out gravel roads. By contrast, one hunter seeks nothing more than unspoiled open landscapes, and wild animals unaffected by humans. Such a hunter brings the same amount of revenue into our country as roughly 2000 tourists.

The knife in the back of us hunters is a handful of uninformed people in Namibia who run anti-hunting campaigns, who rave on social media about hunters who share photos of animals that have been hunted, who post ugly comments about NAPHA because of our leopard census project, who crucify our Ministry of Environment and Tourism for moving lion to bigger and more protected habitats, and for granting licenses for problem animals because of human-wildlife conflict. Unfortunately the list goes on and on.

NAPHA members operate responsibly within the framework of the law, within the ethics of our profession and our code of conduct, and with the aim to protect wildlife and its habitat from modern society. I cannot even imagine the cost of reclaiming and restocking a formerly pristine wilderness area after it has

been totally destroyed by poaching, overgrazing, timber cutting and over-tourism. In principle any system that is self-serving is also self-motivating and produces the best results. No businessperson worth their salt is stupid enough to neglect the resource on which they depend.

Who are the culprits when it comes to conservation? Who are the senseless killers? Is it those who oppose hunting or is it the poacher that kills wildlife out of poverty? Is it me who selectively hunts old males, thereby raising money to protect all the wildlife and their habitat, or those who publish wrong information or who are raising millions of dollars to misinform the public and demonize hunting? A lie doesn't become the truth, wrong doesn't become right, and evil doesn't become good, just because it is accepted by the majority.

Proffering baseless assertions as truth is not only immoral and unethical, it also undermines the stability of our democratic society. Reliable information is the bedrock of any institution, be it science, government or private enterprise. If our citizens cannot tell the difference between fact and fiction, then the entire project of civilization turns to dust. Mainstream media outlets also ought to have a better understanding of their responsibility to the public and should refuse to signal-boost these kinds of outright lies.

Ladies & gentlemen, I want to also throw a rock in the bush here today, hoping that an angry leopard won't jump out, with a subtle warning and hopefully leave you with some food for thought...

With all of these onslaughts going on, our wildlife has never been more vulnerable, and our hunting community has never been more weak and desperate.

We are constantly looking for means and ways and arguments to uphold and save our businesses, our hunting community and most importantly our passion and our history. And thus, we have been hammering and abusing the whole sustainability concept - we use money and meat and harvesting horns as the constant arguments for hunting, but let's face it, they are the spinoff's which contribute to conservation. Have you ever been able to explain to someone WHY you real-ly hunt? Isn't it time we become brave and voice this sufficiently as

well? And not only by hiding behind the money-driven concept...

NAPHA members play a leading role in conservation. We invest in and conduct studies and scientific assessments, and as science progresses, our members are the final implementers. However, many people tend to ignore our local knowledge, which is vital in conservation. - why is this going to waste?

And yes, it is an indisputable fact that hunting provides the necessary economic incentive to con-serve our wilderness areas and to justify them against the pressures of alternative use like agriculture and livestock keeping. Hunting is the ONE THING that preserves habitat - and without a healthy and natural habitat, we won't have any wildlife left. We do not merely hunt, we are also nature lovers who strive for sustainable and ethical hunting methods that contribute to conservation strategies.

BUT ladies & gentlemen - Hunting is ALSO an indelible part of our history and has its place in teaching us who we are. It provides us with an expansive sense of what it means to be a human being, where we fit into the circle of life, our rightful role of participating in nature, and there for representing the fact that no being is omnipotent or invulnerable. It tells us that as powerful and dominant as even the kings and emperors of their respective domains, one day, they too will be subject to failure and collapse. We are anchored to this world just as the smallest insect is, and as such our fates are entwined. We all will experience the wheel of natural progression. Hunting makes us realize our place in this world. Just as Mufasa was telling Simba to return to reclaim the throne, he also told Simba that he must once more embrace the realities of life, and find his place in the world. To this effect, all of us, as hunters, have a role to play in modern day society. We must facilitate the interaction that allows others to enjoy true wilderness experiences. Experiences that change people....and have a restorative power which is meaningful into today's cramped world.

In the end we conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. And we understand only what we are taught. I am convinced that if you want to save something - your soul, your heart,



## World Conservation Force Bulletin

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your relationships, your marriage, your family, your country or the world – you stand up and fight. No excuses, no detours, no debates, no patience, you stand up and say, enough is enough! And this is what we will do.

One of my favorite antelopes is the gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*). This large

and beautiful Namibian antelope has a striking appearance with its distinct coloration and long spear-like horns. But its unique adaptation to harsh conditions, where scarce water and intense heat are the norm, sets it apart from the others. The gemsbok was chosen as Namibia's national animal because of its courage, elegance

and pride; the national coat of arms bears the image of this unmistakable desert dweller. It is Namibia's most formidable swordsman, and so are we, the hunters – especially the ones with the NAPHA logo on their website...

<http://www.napha-namibia.com/home/>.

## One Alarming Result of the Mid-Term Elections

The ranking minority member of the House Committee on Natural Resources (the top Democrat on that committee) is expected to become the Chairman of the committee in January when Democrats become the majority party in the House of Representatives. Rep. Raul Grijalva of Arizona introduced radical anti-hunting legislation in this session of Congress and is expected to become the Chairman. His bill is named the Conserving Ecosystems by Ceasing the Importation of Large Animal Trophies Act, or CECIL Act. He introduced the bill in late September as an amendment to the Endangered Species Act.

His bill would totally prohibit the import of elephant and lion hunting trophy imports from Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Tanzania and it would require import permits supported by enhancement findings

for trophies of game animals proposed for listing but not yet listed. The enhancement finding would have to be made in a full, noticed, public rule-making process. The bill would also mandate an enhancement finding before import of other threatened or endangered species hunting trophies rather leaving it up to regulatory discretion of the FWS whether or not to require proof of enhancement. The bill would also "abolish" Secretary Zinke's International Wildlife Conservation Council (IWCC on which I serve) and mandate that the Government Accounting Office (GAO) examine whether trophy hunting helps conservation. Of course, safari hunting helps conservation, which has already been well documented by FWS, the IWCC, IUCN, et al. It is the ominous aim of this bill that is alarming.

This bill is not the first anti-hunting activities of the representative. His staff released and broad-casted flawed reports in 2016 and again in 2017 attacking safari hunting: "Missing the Mark: African Trophy Hunting Fails to Show Consistent Conservation Benefits."

Certainly, the House Committee on Natural Resources has to be watched carefully for some time to come.

Bill Number: S.1918

Sponsor: Sen. Menendez, Robert [D-NJ] (Introduced 08/03/2015)  
Committees: Senate - Environment and Public Works

Latest Action: Senate - 08/03/2015  
Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

## Perverse Ethics: The Immorality of Anti-hunters

Permit me to share insight from decades of contending with anti-hunters and animal rightists... Who really hold the high ground? Who cares the most for wildlife, wild places and rural people? Who are the naturalists? Who spend the most time in the out-of-doors? Who pay the lion's share of dedicated operating budget revenue of state wildlife departments? Who have initiated the most wildlife legislation and wildlife law enforcement? Who have secured and maintained the most habitat? Who have been the long-term stewards of the natural world? Of course, hunters and anglers is the answer in each instance.

The anti-hunters are those that would eliminate hunting and all of the derivative benefits arising from hunting. They have expressed that they "would rather wildlife cease to exist than be hunted." In fact, most wildlife would cease to exist if their view of morality carried the day. They put their warped sense of ethics first, above the welfare and even survival of animals, rural people, hunters, et al. That is immoral, perverse ethics. Their perversion is more than the antithesis of conservation and wildlife perpetuation, anti-hunters put their interests before the welfare and livelihoods of rural people as well as hunters. Moreover, their lies and

deceptive tactics are certainly not ethical conduct. Nor are their anti-social threats and behavior moral conduct. Their immoral conduct is more than an occasional lapse, it is their norm.

The public should not be deceived by the self-righteous posture of anti-hunters. They are not what they appear to be. They are irresponsibly opposed to hunting, rather than stewards and conservationists of animals. They are not a substitute nor can they be an alternative to the ecosystem services that hunters provide. Any representation to the contrary is another immoral and irresponsible deception. For example,

regulated hunting by design protects and increases wildlife range, not the activities of anti-hunters. They have no skin in the game. The consequences of their beliefs will never pay the bills or replace the value that hunting brings to wildlife and habitat. If not hunters, then who? The anti-hunters would deprive resources of their highest value and best use. Wildlife, wild habitat, hunters and rural people are all equally threatened by these deceitful people.

The term perverse is to behave in a way that is unreasonable or unacceptable, often in spite of consequences often deliberate and intentional. And so is the campaign against hunting by anti-hunters. They

view their beliefs to be of greater importance than the abundance of wildlife we have today and the welfare of rural people. Is it moral to put one's subjective feelings before the welfare of a species or a population of that species? Before the welfare of people and the cultures of others? Is it reasonable and acceptable? No. Anti-hunting is perverse, destructive activism.

### **Dominion over Wildlife**

Animal rightists are against zoos, circuses, pet ownership, horseback riding, et al. In essence they are against human dominion over animals including wild animals. Of course,

wild animals are part of and within the food chain and their natural fate is to live and die in agony. A bullet is a relatively quick and merciful end for wild game animals and the hunting of few smartly and sustainably provides for all the rest including the most for non-game animals as well.

There can be no mistake from the Bible that man has dominion over wildlife, like it or not.

*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

-Genesis 1:26, King James Bible

## **Give More than a Mere Gift this Christmas**

Christmas provides one of the best opportunities to promote our outdoor-way-of-life to family and friends and even reach their friends. Cabela's, Bass Pro and others are acceptable, wholesome brands under any tree. But they are far, far more than that.

A branded gift from such stores is more than just the product given. It furthers the perpetuation of hunting, fishing, boating and other outdoor activities, which, of course, are healthy and enriching like nothing else. What's more, just the brand value of such mega stores sends an alluring message while it legitimizes all that we do.

Today, we need those positive, wholesome brands luring people to the outdoors and working to secure our sporting

way of life. Wildlife and wild places need a fortified army of outdoor enthusiasts and genuine conservationists. Branded gifts can be such a lure. Such positively branded products subliminally market the outdoors and resound the call of the wild. Try to giftwrap and present the Cabela's or Bass Pro store bag as well as the gift because these brands effectively tout the outdoor life by themselves.

Gifts of such branded outdoor products are just smart. Outdoor products make great gifts for any occasion, but Christmas offers an ideal opportunity to share a mutual passion that will resonate with the season. It fits well with the smell of the tree, the gathering of family like at the hunting camp meat pole, the taste of turkey, duck and venison. It is a gift of

a happier, healthier, wholesome direction. It can be a book or a tool for outdoor use that begs to be used. It can change the course of the life of some family member. Such gifts also reflect well on you and represent who you are.

This is your genuine chance to help save hunting and fishing while passing on a fulfilling and rich part of your life. Bring the whole family shopping as a family outing to reach their friends too. Or use the online catalogues to help with gift selection and to beat the Christmas crowds in the general shopping centers. In short, share hunting to help save hunting this Christmas. Give a gift that keeps giving, too.

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