



Taxi Gram

From: NTA Conservation Committee and Conservation Force

Date: June 18-22, 2012

Re: World Conservation Force Bulletin for July (John Jackson)

Antis Again Challenge "Trophy" Definition

Our review of the 38,000 comments and suggestions to the USF&WS for the next CITES Conference of the Parties also disclosed that the same protectionists are again attempting to get the USF&WS to narrow the definition of "hunting trophy" used by CITES. They caused the FWS to adopt its 2007 regulation that had eliminated crafted items and now they are at it again because the Parties at CoP15 revised the related Resolution to make it clear for all that "manufactured parts" from the trophy were included in the definition. The FWS is in the process of adopting that CoP Resolution with some conditions we have formally objected to, but the same three protectionist organizations want the FWS to challenge the traditional understanding of "trophy" again at the next CoP. "SSN recommends that the Service propose amendments to the definition of 'hunting trophy' included in Resolution Conf. 12.3 (Rev. CoP15) on *Permits and Certificates*, to address the implementation and enforcement problems created by including processed and manufactured products in this definition....The United States is the largest importer of hunting trophies of CITES-listed species...(and) hunting organizations are already exploiting (the broader traditional definition)...'to reduce regulatory hurdles to importation'." Who would think that protectionists could change the definition of "trophy?" Well, they did and they are trying again.

They also described quotas set by the Parties at a CoP to be a "loophole" that should be "reviewed and renewed at each CoP" and to "remove the presumptions" to "accept the quotas...." Of course, the antis already convinced FWS to do this for U.S. imports in the 2007 regulations, but now want the FWS to impose their views on the rest of the world.

Conservation Force, IPHA, SCI, FACE and CIC and affected range countries were at CoP15 to recapture the traditional definition of "trophy" and will be at CoP16 to protect your interests again as necessary.

National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress in Canada

One of the biggest and most important events in recent Canadian conservation history was held in the Canadian capital of Ottawa, Ontario in May. The 4-day "Conservation Congress" was unprecedented and is being heralded as the greatest event of its kind ever held in Canada. <http://www.nfwcc.com>

Conservation Force was a full partner in the Congress, as were Dallas Safari Club, the Wild Sheep Foundation and Boone & Crockett Club. We are proud to state that Conservation Force board member Shane Mahoney was the *Honorary Chair* of the Congress and key organizer of the whole event. Of particular note, Shane did it all under the name and as representative of Conservation Force throughout the event. "Shane Mahoney, Director, Conservation Force."

I too was a speaker on the image of hunting and building greater public acceptance of sustainable use of wildlife. Additionally, I served on the *Expert Panel of Laws and Policies* that identified the challenges and opportunities in that arena in the 21st century and beyond.

Over 500 U.S. and Canadian conservation leaders attended this historic event. The objective was to develop a realistic agenda for action and wildlife priorities and to launch the "go forward positions." The importance of the Congress was really brought home when the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, appeared as the Banquet Speaker and announced the formation of a Prime Minister's *National Hunting and Fishing Panel*, HAP, to guide Canada into the future. What a development! The Prime Minister said Canada would also adopt a *National Conservation Plan* as suggested by the Conservation Congress covering conservation of wildlife and habitat as well as restoring and recovering species at risk which will all start with a nationwide survey. The Prime Minister also announced the elimination of Canada's long-gun registration to the cheers of the dinner audience. The Prime Minister stated that "hunters and anglers are among the most ardent and dedicated conservationists." Later, the Honorable Peter Kent, Minister of the Environment, said "the two (hunting and conservation) are naturally reinforcing...I get it."

The agenda for the 12th century can't be covered in this space, but let me assure you, as Shane said in his closing, this was a "seminal event" that "set the bar high." The North American Model that was never too far from discussion was said to be under attack by some, but Shane pointed out that the Model is a "conceptual framework" that should be "built upon, rather than attacked." Shane emphasized that conservation needs a broader base, a coalition of conservation organizations to serve as "a force, a *Conservation*

Necklace made of organizations of all those with a passion for the natural world.” This need to grow a broader coalition of kinds of organizations was a consistent theme. “Conservation is important to hunting, and hunting is important to conservation.” That is certainly one reason why conservation matters, but it is also why sportsmen and women need to work with others on the issues we share.

There were many other provoking ideas. The Director of USF&WS, Dan Ashe, cited the projected human population growth in this century in some detail then stabbed home the point with the statement that sustainable use is an illusion, “the illusion of sustainable use,” to quote, because of that exploding human population growth. That thought echoes in my mind and heightens how important habitat conservation continues to be.

Rosie Cooney, the new Chair of IUCN’s Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Groups, went into a detailed description of the Suleiman markhor project in the Torghar Hills of Pakistan that mesmerized the audience as I squirmed in my seat knowing of Conservation Force’s litigation to save the program from the USF&WS’s years of “maladministration” of the permits and the two downlisting petitions.

James Earl of the National Wild Turkey Federation made a historical observation of how the Lacey Act had nearly interfered with the reintroduction and restoration of the wild turkey because there had been program costs that were feared to be treated as a sales price for the wild birds, i.e. sale of game is illegal in most states regardless of the purpose. The Habitat Conservation Trust described the 140 million dollars sportsmen the province had generated that has been matched and multiplied.

Ben Carter of Dallas Safari Club said DSC’s members “live our mission.” Indeed they do. This was carried over by other speakers and credited to Ben over and over as worthy of emulation for all sportsmen and women.

Jack Ward Thomas signed off that “This is our watch...The time is ours. If not us, then who?” Indeed it is our watch and we should be proud that we are the *force*: Sportsmen are the force.

Hunting for an Acceptable Image: Building Public Acceptance for Sustainable Use of Wildlife

One of the presentations I was asked to make at the Conservation Congress was to address the image and general public’s acceptance of hunting as a form of sustainable use. This is a bullet point outline of that presentation which readers may find of interest.

Hunting needs to be seen as a *good thing*. The public perception can affect the license we are given by society to do what we do that is so very dear to us. What follows are *good things* about hunting that are supported by the facts. If you think about it, they make simple, common sense, so make them known.

1. Hunters are naturalists, passionate about nature, in tune, in touch, in love. Fact: The fact is that most surveys confirm that hunters spend more time in the woods than any other group in society. This is true despite hunting seasons being shortened because of excess demand, even though others are not bound by season dates. Traditional sportsmen are the real *outdoorsmen*.
2. Hunters are infatuated with the game they pursue. Fact: No one pays more or gives more to wildlife. Sportsmen contribute more than all others combined, including for non-game animals.
3. Hunters are the stewards, stakeholders and gamekeepers of wildlife and wild places. Fact: It only makes sense and the restoration and abundance of “game animals” is absolute proof.
4. Conservation Ethic – Americans, and particularly North American hunters, are known for the *conservation ethic* they hold. North America should be known for its conservation success and sportsmen’s conservation ethic as much as for democracy. It is our signature achievement. The American sportsmen and women have led the way.
5. Role in the *North American Model* – The Sportsmen and women have been the core of the model, the most renowned model in the history of the world.
6. *Land Ethic* – Who after all fathered the *land ethic*? Aldo Leopold, the “father of modern wildlife management” and a devoted bow hunter til the end. The *Sand County Almanac* was about his hunting camp.
7. Minority – This is good and bad. Since when are minorities to be mistreated in North America? Hunters should be afforded protection, not treated prejudicially. Regardless, there are 70-80 million U.S. hunters and fishermen that hunt and fish over a period of three to five years. When surveyed, those participants consider themselves sportsmen, hunters and anglers. In the U.S., 147 million living people have hunted or fished in their lives. Such numbers call for respect, for recognition, and for fair treatment. Don’t cower.
8. Morality – This is about why we hunt, aside from the conservation service it provides. Be able to describe the indescribable. Hunting is a relationship with nature. It is natural, it is fun, it is self-discovery and fulfillment. It naturally and necessarily awakens the senses. It completes the circle. We all hunt for our own reasons, but it is rewarding and fulfilling. There must be something to it or 70-80 million people would not do it. The history, the people and the following speaks for itself. So many other activities are only substitutes. It is the *real thing*. It is immoral to deprive individuals of something so important to their being.

9. Sportsmen were the first environmentalists. Sportsmen know firsthand about air and water quality, habitat, scenic rivers, wetlands and biodiversity. They authored the ESA, MMPA, EPA and so much more. They were the first on watch and in touch. The environment is not abstract or academic to them.
10. It is "licensed and regulated." This means it is sanctioned and supported. Hunters are caring, responsible, regulated and accountable.
11. It is healthy – engaging in outdoor nature-focused activities helps prevent and correct physical, mental, emotional, educational and social issues for youth and adults alike. It is enriching.
12. It is ideal for family and friends to share, to bond and build relationships that are so very important in life.

Above all, don't apologize. Be proud. Sportsmen and women pay more for the research, for the habitat, for the law enforcement, for the management, for the very infrastructure of governed conservation, than all others combined. More for non-game animals as well. You pay everyone and are paid by no one. You are the givers and caretakers, not the takers.

No matter the reference or measurement, you merit a place at the table. Sportsmen are the force.

Positions USF&WS Considering for CITES CoP16 Further Threaten Canada's Polar Bear

In April, FWS published the positions it was considering for the next CITES Conference of the Parties, CoP16 in Thailand, March 3-15, 2013. If the U.S. is to propose anything at this late point in time, CITES Resolutions require it to be a range country of the species that is being proposed. The U.S. is a range country of polar bear.

The FWS announced it was not likely to make a proposal to uplist narwhal and white rhinoceros (though it did not state the time had passed for rhino since it is not a range nation of rhino). The African lion was not on the menu at all, so now any such proposal is up to African range countries. That deadline is early October. A species of interest to readers that is still under consideration ("undecided") is the polar bear, which had been suggested by the International Fund for Animal Welfare, the Species Survival Network and the Center for Biological Diversity for uplisting to Appendix I. A transfer to Appendix I would end all commercial trade of polar bear, which would have the greatest impact on Canada. It would also add another barrier against U.S. trophy imports. Canada is said to be the only country with commercial trade, but unsaid is the Alaskan native trade that is commonly overlooked. An uplisting would act as a bar on Alaskan native trade as well because all commercial trade is barred for Appendix I species.

Of course, Conservation Force and its partners filed an extensive opposition to any such proposal by the United States with itemized reasoning. The comment filed by WWF-TRAFFIC is particularly worth of note and may surprise readers. An excerpt of that jewel follows:

Polar Bear (*Ursus maritimus*)

WWF and TRAFFIC cannot support the transfer of Polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I for the following reasons:

- WWF and TRAFFIC support the principle that, having adopted criteria for listing species on Appendices I and II, the CITES Parties should adhere to them. Not to do so would be to jeopardize the listing of those species that clearly do meet the criteria, and are in urgent need of listing.
- The Polar bear does not meet any of the biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I as established in Annex 5 to Resolution Conf. 9.24 (rev CoP14). An estimated 20,000-25,000 Polar bears currently range through Canada, Greenland, Norway, Russia and the US. The global population of Polar bears is therefore not small and furthermore, the global population has not undergone a marked decline in the recent past and the species' area of distribution is not restricted.
- WWF and TRAFFIC would note that the IUCN Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) is conducting an assessment of the global Polar bear population at this time. This assessment is not expected to be concluded prior to the October deadline for the submission of CITES listing proposals; it would be prudent to await the outcome of this assessment prior to taking another Appendix I proposal forward.
- The main threat to Polar bears is the retreat of sea-ice habitat driven by global warming. While climate change and the subsequent impacts on Polar bears will occur at different rates and times across the Arctic, the current lack of action to reign in CO2 emissions will ultimately threaten Polar bears globally. The loss of sea ice habitat (which polar bears depend on for feeding, traveling, and mating) associated with rapid climate warming is a significant and ongoing threat to the conservation of the species.
- Additional threats to the species include industrial development (such as offshore oil and gas, shipping and mining), toxic pollution and conflict with humans.
- CITES criteria are based on consideration of past declines and not projections far into the future. At CoP13, Parties voted to remove from the criteria a provision whereby a species could be listed on Appendix I if it was thought likely to meet the criteria within five years. The rationale for this decision was that such a provision was unnecessary, since the CoP meets approximately every three years. It would, therefore, be incongruous if Parties were to include the polar bear on Appendix I on the basis of a population decline that is predicted to take place over a 50 year period into the future.

- Trade is not a significant threat to the species. Canada is the only country that currently allows commercial exports of polar bear parts and products – all of which result from quotas provided for Aboriginal subsistence hunting. Between 1999 and 2008, an average of 292 Canadian polar bears (2% of the population) entered international trade on an annual basis.
- An Appendix I listing would be unlikely to reduce the number of bears hunted in any range State.
- Since the last CoP, issues have arisen around the viability of harvest levels in three (all within or shared by Canada) of the world's 19 management units. Exports of polar bear parts from these management units are already set at zero, or very low, and therefore an Appendix I listing is extremely unlikely to alter the situation. Regional and federal authorities in Canada are also in the process of updating population estimates for all three units as part of the process to evaluate quotas. Rather than listing the species on CITES Appendix I, WWF and TRAFFIC supports maintaining polar bears on CITES Appendix II, and would encourage the US and all Range States to ensure that harvest is not detrimental to the long term viability of the species.

The USF&WS notice calling for comments on this possible proposal had a rather puzzling justification. It cited its earlier (CoP15) determination that the polar bear meets the biological and trade criteria for inclusion on Appendix I as a standing fact, even though it was wholly rejected at CoP15. It also points out that the "Government of Canada in November 2011 declared that the polar bear in that country was a 'species of concern' under the Species at Risk Act" and that "as a result...Canada...must prepare within 3 years a management plan..." These precautions and protective measures by Canada are additional reasons not to up list the bear, not vice versa. Where will this doubletalk stop? This is a very embarrassing way to treat our good neighbors and can also end-round the Congressional protection intended for Alaskan Native sale of subsistence hand-crafted art and clothing of bear parts. Contradictorily, the FWS has recently confirmed the important "intrinsic role" that native subsistence trade "play(s) in the conservation of marine mammals." *Special Rule for the Polar Bear*, 77 FR 23422 at 23444 through 23445, April 19, 2012.



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Thank you for your investment, partnership and support. If you haven't done so please renew your membership or join today! *"We're proud of what we've been able to do and we could not*

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Sincerely,
National Taxidermists Association