

# AFRICAN INDABA

Volume 7, Issue No 5

eNewsletter

October 2009

Dedicated to the People and Wildlife of Africa

## PHASA President's Opinion

Peter de Villiers Butland

The judgment in the case of the SA Lion Breeders' Association against the Minister of Environmental Affairs has been given at last, the noise from the various parties has died down and South African hunters can hopefully put this sorry saga behind them. A DEAT spokesman summed it up well, saying "Hunting is an important industry but we must manage it in accordance with defensible standards".

Although not all were guilty, the standards which some clients were prepared to accept to tick off a lion on their trophy lists were indefensible. And the willingness of some "PHs" to take those clients' money and to pretend that they were "hunting" a wild animal was despicable.

The damage done to the reputation of our country, to its image in the hunting world and to the reputation of all South African hunters, the good and the bad, by this sloth and greed will take some time to overcome. But it is time to move on.

PHASA has in the past consistently condemned the shooting of captive bred predators, because of actual and potential abuse of the law. PHASA's past president [Stewart Dorrington] was a member of the Panel of Experts. PHASA participated in the consultative process which led to the TOPS regulations and PHASA has noted the judge's detailed comments [*see last African Indaba for details*] and his judgment in the court case.

PHASA has accordingly reconsidered its position on lion hunting in South Africa. It will support the hunting of any and all species that have been released into an extensive wildlife system and can fend for themselves, provided that species listed as TOPS are hunted strictly according to the provisions of the TOPS Regulations and that all species are hunted according to the laws of the land, the PHASA Code of Conduct and the commonly accepted principles of Fair Chase. Unethical and illegal practices will not be tolerated and PHASA members will be held to account if found guilty of misconduct.

## The PHASA Executive Committee on Rhino

- Expert evidence from enforcement and trade monitoring agencies indicated a direct link between the export of rhino horn from recent legal rhino hunting by

Vietnamese, from rhino poaching on private and state land, from cross border smuggling and from the theft of rhino horn from stockpiles, museums, etc. and Far Eastern syndicates.

- In the light of the evidence and the questionable legality of the end use of certain rhino horn hunted in South Africa, PHASA strongly advises its members not to book and conduct hunts with nationals from Vietnam or other Far Eastern countries until Government "has removed this abuse from the SA legal system" which it has undertaken to do in the near future.
- PHASA members with a long term interest in South African hunting and conservation are strongly urged to heed this advisory.

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For hunter-conservationists and all people who are interested in the conservation, management and the sustainable use of Africa's wild natural resources.

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## Spiral Horn Antelope Club: Ssesse Island Sitatunga

Peter Flack

On 28 August 2009 I returned from Bugala Island, one of the 84 islands making up the Ssesse Island archipelago (of which 64 are inhabited), in the northwest corner of Lake Victoria, the largest African and third largest freshwater lake in the world with a shoreline measuring nearly 5000 kilometers in length. These islands form part of the Buganda kingdom based on mainland Uganda and take their name from the time when the then king visited them. One of the islanders, in backing out of the king's presence, became so overwrought by the experience that he farted causing the normally dignified and solemn king to burst out laughing. "Bassese" in the Buganda language means the people who caused the king to laugh.

I was the fifth hunter to try for an island sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekei sylvestris*) on the archipelago since this animal was put back on license by the Uganda Wildlife Authority almost two months ago after an absence of 30 years. Two of the previous hunters had gone home empty handed (one having bungled the only opportunity he had while the other wounded an animal which was not found) and two having shot outstanding species with the help of dogs. Rowland Ward's Records of Big Game has a minimum entry length of 22 inches and I was told that these specimens measured 26 and 27 inches, respectively.



I was keen to hunt this rarest of all sitatunga for a number of reasons. Firstly, a man I admired enormously, the late Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen (after whom the giant forest hog was named), had hunted them on a number of occasions and three of the only 30 entries in *The Book* belonged to him – more entries than anybody else and I wanted to see if I could emulate

him at least once. Secondly, I had read about the islands on a number of occasions and not only wanted to see them for myself but also hunt in the footsteps of men like Meinertzhagen, Buxton (who first described the mountain nyala for science), Downey (the famous East African white hunter), Mellon (author of *African Hunter*) and Pitman (the well known game warden) – world famous hunters all. Lastly, and probably the least valid reason for embarking on this incredibly expensive hunt, was that I wanted to try and complete a collection of all the sitatunga sub-species recognized by hunters the world over even though there are a number of experts, including Selous, who think that all sitatunga are the same.

The hunt cost \$ 32,000.00 - nearly \$ 2,000.00 a day - with a trophy fee of \$5,000.00 for the 14 day hunt, of which, give the travel constraints (car, plane, plane, car, light aircraft, boat and car over two days), only thirteen days could actually be spent hunting. A similar amount could buy you a hunt for bongo, mountain nyala or Lord Derby's eland in a prime location with a highly experienced and successful safari outfitter and professional hunter with every chance of success and therein lies the rub as Shakespeare put it. Having said this, I should mention that I asked for and was given the opportunity to stay on for a further ten days or return for a similar period later, free of charge, if I was not initially successful.

The safari outfitter, Bruce Martin of Lake Albert Safaris, is a well meaning, decent and hardworking man who must be given all credit for the time, money and effort he has spent in opening up the Ssesse Islands to hunting. However, Bruce would be the first to admit that he is neither an experienced professional hunter (he only qualified as such at a South African professional hunting school last year) and has little or no experience in hunting any sitatunga let alone those on the islands. The professional hunter he has employed, Grant Roodt, is a huge, delightful, hardworking and experienced, 30 year old, South African professional hunter but, by his own admission, has limited sitatunga hunting experience in Cameroon and Zambia and has only been on the islands since the end of July.



Hunting is concentrated on a large swamp (approximately 3000 hectares in extent) on Bugala which, measuring some 20,000 hectares, is the largest of the islands. A number of small, high, two man machans have been built bordering the swamp with only one in a palm tree some 800 metres into the swamp itself. Having read Brian Herne's must-read-book, *Uganda Safaris*, in which he wrote that, "All the trophy bulls seemed to be far out in the swamp, usually between 500 and 800 yards", I thought

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Ssesse Island Sitatunga

that all but this machan were probably going to be unproductive, especially as the vegetation in the swamp, other than in the three or four, 200 meter long shooting lanes cut next to each machan, were well over head high. In other words, unless the sitatunga appeared in a shooting lane itself, there would be no chance of a shot and, if it did, you would probably only have moments in which to make one from a mobile platform as most of the machans were built around trees which swayed with the breezes.

So, late in the afternoon of my third hunting day when a good, representative, mature, 20 inch sitatunga bull appeared walking and feeding down a tiny rivulet some 30 metres to the north of the palm tree blind, it did not take me long to make up my mind on the simple basis of a sitatunga near the blind is worth twenty in the middle of the swamp. The 165 grain Blaser cartridge from my custom made .300 Win. Mag., topped by a 2.5-10x56 Schmidt and Bender scope flattened the bull on the spot and the first, fair chase island sitatunga taken with a rifle in 30 years was mine. I was one very happy camper even though some might say that I made a mistake and should have hung in for a bigger one. Time will tell but, as all I ever want from the end of any hunt is a good, representative male animal in a position where I can kill it cleanly with one shot, I don't think so.

To test the waters as I had another ten days left on my safari, I asked whether it would be possible to hunt a second animal. The answer was, yes, at a cost well in excess of the \$ 5,000.00 trophy fee. So, why did I not accept? I think there are a number of reasons:

The accommodation on Bugala consisted of one of three modern houses at Ssesse Habitat Resort. Ours had five bedrooms and bathrooms separated by a large lounge-come-dining room on the top of a hill with a beautiful view over Lake Victoria and other islands in the archipelago. My room was more than adequate and furnished with a double bed (beneath a good quality mosquito net) and bathroom en suite. Unfortunately, the Chinese made aluminium windows and door frames were shoddy with gaps which allowed entry to mosquitoes and lake flies, while the plumbing leaked and hot water was unavailable except for my first night's stay. Equally unfortunately, dogs barking off and on throughout the night and loud music, playing both day and night, was a feature of the stay. A classic East African tented safari camp this was not.

The food was adequate but our very pleasant chef tripled as a waiter and dishwasher - which was done next to the dining room table while we ate.

The only two trackers were away on another island looking for the wounded sitatunga of the client who preceded me and I was helped by two young teenage boys, one more clueless than the next. For example, while sitting in one of the machans on the edge of the swamp, our young, local assistant took four calls on his mobile phone and either would not or could not understand our hand signals instructing him to turn it off. In short, there were none of the normal complement of well trained staff you would normally associate with a safari (particularly where you were paying \$2,000.00 per day), namely, a driver, two

trackers, a baggage man, chef, waiter, tent-come-laundry man, skinner and skinner's assistant and, for example, my professional hunter was obliged to skin my sitatunga on the back of a truck under the outside lights of the house in which we stayed. There was also no skinning shed or secure place to lay out and salt the skin other than in a locked storeroom some kilometres away.

All of the Ssesse Islands are covered by rain forest with the exception of Bugala where large tracts of land have been acquired by a company (owned by Malaysians and select and privileged Ugandan(s)) which has bulldozed huge areas of pristine rain forest and replanted them with palms in order to harvest the nuts for biofuel purposes. During the day, the noise of bulldozers, chainsaws and other heavy machinery is ever present.

The islands are rife with poachers who use dogs to drive the sitatunga into the lake where they are then drowned by their accomplices in canoes. One professional hunter I spoke to and who took over the safari of the first hunter due to the complaints made by him, estimated that there were a minimum of 100 poachers throughout the islands who killed, on average, three to four sitatunga per month which were then sold into the commercial bushmeat market at approximately \$15.00 per animal.

It took about an hour to drive from the accommodation to the swamp over a poor, potholed, dirt road and you were hardly ever out of the sight and sound of the locals. In fact, in the midst of sighting in my rifle - there is no shooting range - a local cycled through the palm plantation behind the target which my PH had set up for me.

While I am sure that things will gradually improve over time and there are plans afoot to build a separate hunting lodge on a small peninsula closer to the swamp in question, right now, if all you want is a sitatunga, then there are better areas which offer a better hunting experience and more value for money than the Ssesse Islands. If you are determined to hunt an island sitatunga, however, (and remember that this is the only game animal available on the islands) then, as they say in the classics, "You pays your money and you takes your chances."

Until, however, Bruce Martin and his team get their act together - including the accommodation, staffing, food, logistics and an understanding of how to hunt island sitatunga - the pricing of the hunt is a little like MacDonald's arguing that their hamburgers should cost \$100 each because that is the price for one made from Kobe beef at London's Savoy Hotel. On the other hand, if you want to make a meaningful contribution to the conservation of island sitatunga which, but for hunting and the well known benefits it brings, will otherwise eventually all end up in Ugandan cooking pots, then you may be happy to pay the excessive price for the hunt. Somehow, however, I cannot help but think that Bruce Martin has not given sufficient thought to this and he and the sitatunga may both live to regret this fact.

# NAPHA Press Release for the International Hunting Community

The Namibia Professional Hunting Association (NAPHA) has informed you about the circumstances that lead to the suspension of issuing leopard and cheetah trophy hunting permits in Namibia. NAPHA also informed you that we recommended to the Ministry of Environment & Tourism (MET) to impose a moratorium on the issuing of leopard and cheetah Trophy Hunting Permits for 2010 to get "our house in order" so that a just, ethical and sustainable utilization of our valuable natural resources can be warranted.

In the meantime we want to assure our esteemed international clientele that we will not tolerate any misconduct by either NAPHA members or non-members that could jeopardize the future of our hunting sector. We, therefore, appeal to the international hunter, please book your Namibian hunt with a NAPHA member to have the guarantee of recourse.

We also want to bring to your attention that we have accepted a policy of zero tolerance if NAMIBIAN hunting laws are transgressed. The responsibility of law-enforcement lies with our Ministry of Environment and Tourism. However, NAPHA has decided to utilize all additional means available to increase the collegial pressure to respect our NAPHA Code of Conduct, the Code of Ethical Sport-hunting for Africa and the Namibian hunting regulations:

1. We shall inform our international partner organizations like Safari Club International (SCI), Dallas Safari Club (DSC) and International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) of any misconduct.
2. Law transgressions will be publicized within our own ranks.
3. We will inform clients about illegal operations of their PH's/outfitters.
4. We will notify other relevant authorities
5. This could lead to the enforcement of the LACEY Act in the US, with possible severe consequences for the hunting clients themselves.
6. Regional Professional Hunters Associations will be informed about the misconduct and /or the transgression should their member be involved.

### NAPHA MISSION STATEMENT

The fundamental purpose of NAPHA is to enhance and maintain, by effective management, an organizational infrastructure that can serve professional hunting members, clients and other interest groups.

Our intent is to ensure and promote ethical conduct, sustainable utilization of natural resources, and to secure the industry for current and future generations

# SCI on Rhino Poaching

Nelson Freeman

Safari Club International (SCI) condemns the recent poaching of white rhinoceros in South Africa committed by criminals posing as legitimate hunters. This elaborate impersonation scheme has allowed several poachers to obtain rhino hunting permits, then put the rhino horn into the illegal commercial trade.

SCI President Dr. Lawrence Rudolph applauds the new laws that the South African Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Buyelwa Sonjica, has introduced to deal with this and pledged SCI's support to raise awareness of this issue. "We call upon the officials of other governments, both those that may be involved in the export of the illegal rhino parts and those on the importing end, to work closely with South Africa to put an end to this trade and upon hunt outfitters to report any suspicious approaches to the authorities," said Dr. Rudolph. Dr. Rudolph also expressed support for the statement by Peter Butland, the President of the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA), that likewise condemned this illegal practice. The PHASA statement noted Butland's "extreme concern" about legitimate hunting being associated in any way with poaching and illegal trade. Dr. Rudolph went on to explain that funds from legitimate hunters who have taken white rhinos legally in South Africa for many years have led to a resurgence of the white rhinos in that country. "Legitimate hunters are proud to have been a part of bringing this great animal back from the brink of extinction," Dr. Rudolph said, "and SCI does not want to see established international conservation work and the good name of the hunting community spoiled by criminals posing as hunters."

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# Zimbabwe: Occupied Farms

TAU SA North informs that a discussion that was held between representatives of organized agriculture in Limpopo and representatives of the Southern African Commercial Farmers Alliance of Zimbabwe on 30 - 31 July 2009. During the discussion it became apparent that some South African Outfitters take hunting clients to Zimbabwe which by itself is no problem. However some clients are taken to stolen farms making deals with the illegal current land beneficiaries causing that resources built up over generations being destroyed. TAU SA North informed PHASA that such outfitters might run the risk of having to compensate the true owners for game taken and loss of future income as a result of these actions.

TAU SA North cited the judgment of the SADC Tribunal with respect to the ownership of agriculture property in Zimbabwe and the clear principles applied in the case. Refraining from presumably illegal actions will also assist in the prevention of the total destruction of the fauna and flora by the illegal occupants of the land.

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## Meilleures pratiques pour une chasse durable : expériences positives d'Afrique australe

Rolf D. Baldus, Gerhard R. Damm et Kai-Uwe Wollscheid  
(Nature & Faune Vol. 23, Numéro 2)

Il est approprié que le magazine Nature & Faune présente un nombre d'études de cas pratiques pour démontrer que la conservation de la faune sauvage en Afrique est loin d'être un échec partout, même si souvent certains conversationnistes veulent nous le faire croire. Au lieu de juste propager le stéréotype selon lequel la faune sauvage d'Afrique est condamnée à l'extinction, il est grand temps de chercher à savoir les facteurs qui déterminent le déclin ou la croissance de la faune sauvage.

L'Organisation des Nations unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO), conjointement avec le Conseil international de la chasse et de la conservation du gibier (CIC), ont présenté

une étude similaire en 2008. Les deux organisations ont, d'un commun accord, analysé certains des facteurs qui déterminent le déclin ou la croissance de la faune sauvage et ont examiné comment l'utilisation durable de la faune sauvage, en particulier la chasse, peut contribuer à la conservation. Un nombre d'expériences positives en provenance du monde entier, certaines d'Afrique, ont été présentées comme 'meilleures pratiques' (Baldus et al., 2008). Les cas africains incluent une évaluation de l'échelle économique et de l'importance en matière de conservation en Afrique Sub-saharienne par Peter A. Lindsay et un document de position sur la chasse au trophée par le WWF en Afrique du sud. L. Chris Weaver et Theunis Petersen expliquent le succès des Conservations communautaires namibiennes. Des articles d'intérêt plus général analysent le tourisme de chasse au trophée, le potentiel économique du tourisme de chasse durable et la nécessité pour les zones de conservation d'être financièrement autosuffisantes dans une plus grande mesure. L'objectif de cet article est de montrer comment les pratiques de chasse

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### Encadre 1

#### Quelques mythes trompeurs sur les populations d'animaux sauvages et les faits réels en faveur de l'utilisation durable de la faune sauvage y compris la chasse

Un clip vidéo a été produit et projeté comme film à bord des avions en prévision de la coupe mondiale de foot en Afrique du sud. Ce court métrage a remporté de nombreux prix pour sa créativité et sa communication. Dans le film, après un récit apparemment drôle racontant l'expérience de touristes en safari en Afrique à qui l'on a présenté des girafes en bois, un cochon déguisé en rhinocéros et une chèvre déguisée en lion, la cruelle vérité est révélée à la fin du clip lorsque le message suivant apparaît : 'La faune sauvage de l'Afrique est en voie de disparition et ce n'est pas drôle'. La morale de ce clip vidéo est que l'utilisation économique de la faune sauvage entraîne son extinction.

Mais est-il vrai que la faune sauvage a disparu ou est en voie de disparition en Afrique ? Oui et Non : Cela est vrai et faux pour plusieurs régions. La cause de l'extinction dans ces zones est-elle l'utilisation commerciale de la faune sauvage ? Oui et non. Les utilisations illégales et non durables de la faune sauvage constituent l'une des causes de l'extinction. Un autre facteur plus important est la croissance démographique, l'expansion de l'agriculture et les autres usages de la terre et la mauvaise gestion de la faune sauvage. L'achat par les touristes d'objets faits en ivoire et d'autres objets illégaux de la faune sauvage est un facteur dans certaines zones mais ne sont pas le problème majeur. D'un autre côté, il y a plusieurs endroits où la faune sauvage existe toujours ou a même beaucoup augmenté en raison des bonnes politiques relatives à la faune sauvage et à la bonne gestion des aires protégées. Dans la plupart de ces cas, la faune sauvage est non seulement protégée mais les propriétaires terriens et les populations rurales lui donnent de la valeur en permettant une utilisation durable qui inclut la chasse et le commerce.

Par exemple, l'Afrique du sud, le pays hôte de la prochaine coupe du monde, est un très bon exemple de pays qui a réussi à accroître les populations fauniques. Les zones agricoles dégradées ont été retournées à la faune et les effectifs du gibier ont connu une croissance exponentielle. Les espèces jadis en danger telles que le rhinocéros blanc et le gnou noir ont fait un retour spectaculaire alors qu'ils avaient pratiquement disparu. Cela n'a pas été réalisé simplement en protégeant la faune sauvage ou en interdisant son utilisation. Le contraire est plutôt vrai.

Parmi toutes les utilisations de la faune sauvage, la chasse touristique est d'une importance économique et de conservation particulièrement importante. La chasse organisée a le potentiel de générer des revenus exceptionnels avec des enlèvements minimes d'animaux et peut par conséquent se transformer en une force sociale et économique d'un impact considérable dans les zones rurales sous-développées. Bien que la chasse touristique se prête facilement aux exactions et abus, plusieurs 'pratiques optimales' témoignent de l'impact positif de la chasse durable sur les habitats de la faune sauvage et sur les populations qui cohabitent avec la faune et l'administrent. La publication de ces exemples de meilleures pratiques contribuera à assurer que la chasse et la chasse touristique peuvent être pratiquées de manière appropriée et durable et rempliront leur rôle d'outil de gestion positive et d'encouragement convaincant pour la conservation.

Les leçons apprises montrent que le message du clip vidéo selon lequel 'la Faune sauvage de l'Afrique est mourante' a tort ! Une approche non-interventionniste n'aide pas non plus à arrêter le déclin des espèces. Au contraire, c'est souvent l'utilisation durable qui établit le fondement pour la survie de la faune sauvage. L'utilisation durable et la protection à long terme de la faune sauvage ne se contredisent pas, mais plutôt se complètent ! C'est le message que nous devons communiquer aux touristes.

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#### Meilleures pratiques pour une chasse durable en Afrique australe

convenablement gérées peuvent augmenter le nombre des zones de conservation et accroître la rétention des espèces et des effectifs d'animaux sauvages.

L'Afrique du sud possède des parcs nationaux magnifiques et plus de 10000 domaines fauniques privés regorgeant de gibier. La croissance remarquable des effectifs de la faune sauvage est motivée par une raison plutôt prosaïque et économique. La cause est tout simplement un changement de loi dans les années 1960 et l'entrée en vigueur de cette loi. Désormais, la faune sauvage n'était plus une 'ressource commune' et personne en particulier n'avait la responsabilité de son bien-être et de sa conservation. Les gibiers sont plutôt devenus la propriété de ceux à qui appartient la terre. Après l'adoption de la loi, le gibier a tout d'un coup pris de la valeur pour le propriétaire puisqu'il pouvait le vendre, le chasser et le photographier contre rémunération. La conservation et l'utilisation du gibier de manière durable est alors devenue une bonne affaire puisque les valeurs du gibier ont dépassé celles du bétail. La différence est évidente si l'on considère comme indicateur, la croissance de 20,25% par an réalisée lors des ventes aux enchères du gibier durant la période de 1991-2005 dans le secteur du pâturage de la faune sauvage en Afrique du sud. En comparaison, la croissance annuelle était de 10,38% pour le secteur agricole, 12,13% pour le secteur de l'horticulture, et de 9,46% pour le secteur de la production des animaux domestiques. Sur la période de quinze ans examinée, le secteur agricole a enregistré une croissance totale de 9,76% par an (NAMC, 2006).

Il est grand temps de souligner que le déclin de la nature n'est pas naturel, mais résulte dans une grande mesure des activités humaines, des bonnes ou mauvaises politiques de conservation et d'une bonne ou mauvaise gouvernance. Il existe des pays industrialisés et densément peuplés tels que l'Allemagne qui bénéficient de populations impressionnantes et croissantes de faune sauvage. En Allemagne, chaque année, les chasseurs abattent 1,4 million de gros mammifères tels que le chevreuil, le cerf et les porcs sauvages. Ils paient des sommes colossales aux propriétaires pour avoir le privilège de chasser et, par conséquent la faune sauvage est en augmentation. Bien que le système de l'Afrique du sud soit quelque peu différent et que le pays soit plus grand et moins densément peuplé que l'Allemagne, il avait presque exterminé les gros ongués avant que la loi ne soit adoptée puisque la faune sauvage rivalisait avec le bétail domestique. Après que la valeur du gibier ait dépassé celle du bétail, des astucieux propriétaires de bétail ou de moutons ont réorganisé leurs activités et sont devenus propriétaires de ranchs de gibier. Environ 8500 touristes chasseurs prêts à payer le prix fort, ont abattu près de 54000 gibiers par an (Lindsey, Roulet & Romañach, 2006) et plus de 200 000 chasseurs locaux (Damm, 2005) en ont abattu plus d'un demi-million. En dépit de cela, les zones de conservation ainsi que les effectifs de gibier ont augmenté année après année. D'un autre côté, il y a des pays en Afrique qui ont interdit la chasse depuis plusieurs années, cependant cela n'a pas empêché les effectifs de la faune sauvage de décroître fortement. Il n'est pas vrai que la gestion de la faune sauvage échoue partout en Afrique. L'encadre 1 donne une idée de tels messages potentiellement

trompeurs,

Contre toute attente, les pays comme l'Afrique du sud, le Botswana, la Namibie, et en dépit des troubles de la décennie écoulée, dans une certaine mesure, même le Zimbabwe, ont réussi à accroître les effectifs de la faune sauvage et à utiliser ce patrimoine naturel de façon durable.

La FAO et le CIC travaillent de concert pour générer le savoir et rassembler les informations sur la contribution éventuelle de l'utilisation durable de la faune sauvage, en particulier la chasse, à la conservation. Il est nécessaire de se concentrer sur les méthodes positives et éprouvées de conservation qui en même temps profitent aux populations locales.

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## Giant Sable Report

Pedro Vaz Pinto

Months of preparations finally culminated on the crucially needed capture operation, and the results were staggering and above expectations. A huge success!

In the last couple of weeks before the operation, we made necessary improvements on the 8 km fence (delimiting the 400 hectare sanctuary) and dealt with all the red tape issues and logistics. The seasonal burnings had arrived later than in previous years, but the woodland seemed in good condition to meet our requirements – good aerial visibility with the trees mostly leafless, and the area almost cleared of grass. In the meantime we had Luis Verissimo, based in US, monitoring the daily burnings in Cangandala and Luando through the MODIS satellite, and producing weekly maps showing the progress of burnings in both reserves.

The latest trap camera shots recorded the sable/hybrid herd in mid-July (Photo 01), and with little surprise they were at S3C, usually their favorite salina in the dry season. Furthermore, lab results on mtDNA from dung pellets collected on a certain *anhara* in Luando reserve the previous month, confirmed what we suspected and hoped for: they were of *Hippotragus niger variani* – giant sable!

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Giant Sable Report

By the end of the month everything was ready, and the operation officially started in July 24<sup>th</sup>, with the arrival in Malanje of Barney O'Hara on his well equipped Helicopter Hughes 500, from Botswana. Pete Morkel was with us once more, as the leading vet, and had arrived a few days earlier. Later on, Jeremy Andersen and Richard Estes, also spent a few days in Cangandala to kindly assist us with their outstanding expertise on these animals. The capture operation was sponsored by a Block 15 (Sonangol as concessionary, Esso as operator, and other associated companies) grant, but a special mention is due to several people who kindly assisted with logistics on the ground such as Henriette Koning, as to the company Oceaneering and the Angolan military FAA, who facilitated the fuel acquisition and transport to the park. The operation was fully recorded on HD video for documentary, by our friend Kalunga Lima from the local producing company LS Produções, and he did obtain some really spectacular footage. And the local television TPA also kept a team on the ground for a couple of weeks and was able to obtain great informative footage that was subsequently broadcasted nationally and generated great enthusiasm.

During the three and a half weeks that the operation lasted we were based in Cangandala NP and doing morning chopper flights every day. The main objective was of course to find and capture as many of the last pure cows in Cangandala as possible, and transport them into the 400ha breeding enclosure. Secondly and more ambitiously, we wished to locate some sable in Luando and, if we're lucky, to dart and bring a bull to Cangandala. One of the crucial preparations during the first week of the operation was, under the demanding and perfectionist supervision by Morkel, building a temporary holding pen, a sort of quarantine site where we would keep the females adjusting under close monitoring for a few days, before definitive release.

Typically, we would start flying as soon as the weather allowed, which would be between 6h30 and 8h30, depending on the morning mists, and each daily flight would last from 2 to 4 hours, sometimes with a quick stop for refueling, and often having to land to handle animals or check things on the ground. On every flight, Barney would be skillfully piloting his chopper on the front seat and I would be seating on his right and carrying the maps; Pete, being left-handed, was positioned directly behind Barney, from where he would aim and shoot to dart the animals. Occasionally a fourth passenger would seat next to Pete.

Whenever an animal was spotted and we decided he should be darted, we would keep the visual contact from a distance for a couple of minutes, while Pete would "make" is dart - basically preparing the cocktail of drugs and put them into the dart. When the dart was ready, Barney would gently lead the animal into a nearby open area (generally an "anhara"), and the next stage would be a vertiginous chase culminating with Pete darting from a few meters above the animal. The chase itself most of the times lasted less than a minute, but was always an adrenaline-full ride, showing the pilot's amazing skills in spectacular fashion.

Once the animal was darted (and very few shots were missed by Pete), we would back-off immediately and monitor the

animal from a safe distance while waiting for the drug to produce its effects. The animal would go down between 3 to 7 minutes. Then the chopper would land as close as possible, so that we could rush to the site, where the animal would be handled quickly. The standard procedure was to check the animal's condition, remove the dart and treat the wound, check for ticks and treat the skin with insecticide, plus inject general antibiotic and deworm medication. The teeth would be checked to estimate age, and females would be checked for any signs of breeding. The horns in bulls were measured, and on the females that were to be relocated into the sanctuary area, the horn tips were removed to avoid injuries during social interaction in the quarantine area. On the darted animals in Luando we sprayed the horn tips with red paint to make them more easily identified in subsequent flights. All the darted animals were marked with color ear brinks, and some animals were released with VHF and/or GPS/GSM tracking collars.

Handling would last just a few minutes, after which the animal was ready for the last stage: release or transport into the holding pen. The release was a very straightforward process, injecting the antidote, and literally within seconds the animal would recover fully and move off, confused but probably feeling nothing more than a mild hangover.

Translocating the animals was a different story altogether and quite an exciting exercise. The sable would be flown a few kilometers suspended by their legs 30mt below the helicopter, to a drop-off area where other participants and visitors would be waiting. Here, the animal would be landed on top of a stretcher, and then driven in the back of a pick-up truck into the quarantine area, where the antidote would be finally given. During the whole process, the animal would be drugged, blindfolded and with ears blocked with cotton, so it would be totally unaware of all the commotion surrounding.

On the first day of flights we headed towards the prime

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## African Indaba eNewsletter

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Giant Sable Report

area in Cangandala, and five minutes into the flight we saw the dominant roan bull (yes, the shameless liberal bull, that has been messing around with our sable females for so long!), but after a split second hesitation, we decided not to dart him (to be castrated) just yet, thus saving his masculinity. Although we didn't see him again, that proved to be the right decision, as a couple hundred meters ahead we headed into the main herd. The group was larger than anticipated, totaling 16-17 animals between sable cows and hybrids. We chose a hybrid female (Photos 03, 04), which was cleanly darted and quickly released back with a VHF tracking collar. Sticking to our main plan, the idea was to use her in a few days, to lead us to the pure females, one by one. This hybrid was of course a well known beast; in fact one of the oldest hybrids and the same female that had been caught in a snare trap back in December 2007, and which we knew to had barely survived. The wound had healed by now, but the animal kept a nasty scar and her right hind leg was still clearly swollen.

In any case, and over the following weeks, this poor hybrid proved to be a very competent *Judas* and crucial to the success of the operation, leading us every odd day to all the pure females.

We identified in total 9 pure sable females in the group, and we managed to capture them all! This was a result clearly above our conservative expectations. We were quite sure there were less than 10 pure sable in Cangandala, but suspected there could be as few as 4 or 5, so finding more and getting them all was superlative. We can't exclude completely the possibility of existing one or two more pure sable females somewhere in the park, but this seems highly unlikely. Nevertheless, the trap cameras will keep the area under surveillance, as always.



First Royal Sable Bull

It was no surprise to learn that all the females were relatively old with estimated ages between 8 and 14 years, and the youngest cows being born in 2001. Although being old, all the females were in excellent physical condition, healthy fat, with

shiny coats and showing no ticks. This is probably result of the abnormal present circumstances in Cangandala, with low predation pressure, low levels of competition, and bizarrely low breeding rates. Only one female had a bit of an udder and had produced a calf (hybrid of course) a few months back. The remaining cows showed no sign of pregnancy either.



Another Captured Bull

In spite of their relatively old age, Pete estimates that even the older females should give us at least 2-3 years of breeding before their teeth wear out to the point where she will starve to death (thus dying of old age).

The early success in Cangandala set the tone for even more exciting surprises in Luando, where we focused while the *Judas* was left undisturbed for a few days to rejoin the group. Like in Cangandala we were right on the money, and as we flown the first time to where we had collected the giant sable dung back in June, we couldn't believe our eyes when we saw at the edge of the *anhara*, the unmistakable dark silhouette – a giant sable bull! He was cleanly darted and handled on the ground, and of course it was a very special moment to grab and feel those massive and spectacular horns for the first time. It was no longer a creature of myth – it was there, bones, flesh and horns. And what a fine specimen it was!

Half an hour later and not far, we also darted an adult female (Photo 07). She was also apparently alone, but a full udder indicated that she had recently calved, so a small calf was probably hidden somewhere nearby. Subsequently we witnessed as the cow was joined by the calf after a few days, a week later with another female with calf, and a couple of weeks later with another female, a couple yearlings and a territorial bull. This is normal behavior in July/ August as the females have recently calved on their own, and slowly start to regroup and reestablish the social bonds. Again, in marked contrast with the situation in Cangandala, where all the females (and hybrids) were found together, during what should have been their breeding season.

In the following weeks our lucky strike continued, not only with the referred fêmeas in Cangandala, but ending up find-

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Giant Sable Report

ing and darting in Luando a total of seven territorial bulls, plus one other found in a group of 7 bachelor males (bachelor herds are a classic sable social unit, formed by bulls who don't own a territory, usually young males recently expelled from the female herd). Not in our wildest dreams we would have expected such extraordinary results! If anything, we were just a bit surprised to find so many bulls and very few females in Luando (only the ones referred in the previous paragraph), but this was probably caused by a combination of seasonal elusive behavior due to calving, and their less conspicuous color and posture.

None of the bulls darted could be considered as a remarkable specimen but they were all good examples of the "giant sable type". The horn lengths were somewhat disappointing, and of course it would have been nicer to dart a really big bull with 60+ inch horns but it wasn't to be. Six of the bulls were mature with pitch-black coats, with ages estimated between 8 and 12 years, and their horn lengths ranged between 50 and 54 inches. The remaining two were young bulls and still brown-colored, a 4 year old with 43" horns, and a 6 year old 49 incher. They may have been pretty average for a giant sable, but still more than enough to embarrass sable from elsewhere in Africa. Going through the record book of Rowland Ward one can verify that the record trophy for a non-Angolan (non-giant) sable was a 55 incher shot in 1898, while only eight specimens ever measured over 51 inches, and none was in the past 30 years!

With the pure females being darted and translocated into the holding pen in Cangandala, the next obvious thing to do was bringing a bull from Luando. It was decided that bringing more than one bull would almost surely lead to confrontation between them which could be disastrous – better to bring one and let him focus on the pretty, even if not terribly young, cows. To bring a bull and being more than 100km away from Cangandala seemed an insurmountable problem in terms of logistics, so we resorted to the Angolan military Air Force and their participation was outstanding – very professional, competent and enthusiastic. As in other occasions when we searched for the giant sable, they were one of the key partners, and this time Genl Hanga (chief of staff of air force) even spent a few days assisting us in the field.

One bull, chosen because he was caught relatively closer to an intermediate landing site (village), had been released with a VHF transmitter, so when the time came, he was recaptured and airlifted by the Hughes 500, as was done with the females (Photos 42, 43). Then he was off-landed in the village, where a military Russian-build MI-8 was on standby. He was then loaded onto the MI-8 and flown to Cangandala, where the pick-up awaited to take the bull to the pen. The whole exercise lasted less than two hours and went flawlessly. Catching a bull and bringing him to Cangandala was of course a major accomplishment, and understandably led to huge excitement among all the participants, including local villagers, officials and represented authorities. The national TV obtained excellent and unprecedented footage, which opened all the news reports the following day and featured in major newspapers.



**Bull in Holding Pen**

The females (and bull) were being regularly introduced into the holding pen, sometimes one-a-day, or every two days but on three occasions we were able to catch two in a row on the same day. During the 9 days we had animals inside the pen, we managed to get them to drink water in good quantity in plastic water basins buried in the ground, but providing them with fresh grass and browse proved to be a much more challenging task. We struggled to gather significant amounts of fresh palatable grass every day, and the animals seemed to eat just a small portion. Not that this was unexpected, given the artificial conditions inflicted upon these until now totally wild antelopes, but forced us to release them soon after the ninth and last female had been captured. The holding pen serves various purposes. Firstly, allows us to monitor the animals to make sure they have recovered fully from the capture exercise, or identify any abnormal behavior or condition; secondly it forces them to make or reestablish crucial social bonds, reducing stress levels and allowing them to be released all together as one group; lastly it may make them a bit more used to captivity and human presence, like getting them to feed and drink on artificial containers. All this had been achieved, and from early observations it was clear that the females had accepted and naturally submitted to the male dominance, following him everywhere he went inside the pen.

One extra benefit of keeping the animals inside the holding pen, was being able to show them, in a very controlled way of course, to dozens of people who visited the park during that week, including the media. More importantly, the Minister of

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Giant Sable Report

Environment herself Excellency Dr<sup>a</sup> Fátima Jardim made sure to be present with the Governor of Malanje Excellency Dr. Boaventura Cardoso, plus their most notable deputies.

Finally on the afternoon of the ninth day, we opened the door and left quietly. We later learned from a video camera left rolling near the pen door that the bull was the first to come out (Photo 47), closely followed by the females in order of hierarchy.

Over the following days the animals were radio-tracked from a safe distance, confirming that they were all together in one group including the bull. They patrolled the fence and got habituated to its presence, while they have been browsing and drinking water in go. In the last few days of operation we went for the hybrids, but only managed to dart a second hybrid female (Photo 49). By then we had caused too much disturbance and the herd without the old females had completely lost the cohesion. The hybrids were now all over the place and our "Judas" finally did not join with other animals. In total we darted nine pure females and two hybrids in Cangandala, plus one female and eight bulls in Luando. A totally unexpected bonus was a female pacassa (Angolan form of the forest buffalo), darted and collared in Cangandala

Over more than 60 hours of operational flights, other wildlife seen included several herds of roan in both reserves; one herd of waterbuck in Luando; some sitatunga, reedbuck and yellow-backed duikers (surprising quite a few of these) in Luando; a lot of bushpigs in Luando, but warthogs mostly in Cangandala; a few bushbucks and hundreds of common duikers everywhere. A highlight was flying over a leopard out in the open in broad day light in Luando – a really spectacular view. Species like lechwe, and eland were not seen, but in any case they are presumed extinct as result of war. This is particularly sad in the case of red lechwe as there used to be easily seen in thousands on the Luando floodplain.

In spite of the moderate numbers of wildlife seen, we also saw plenty of poaching signs, which included dozens of snare-lines and several poaching camps, some of them active. On occasions we landed near such camps in Luando, where we would find sometimes dozens of animal's carcasses, drying skins and smoked meat, traps and shotgun cartridge shells. In one camp we collected 170 snare traps! The remains that we could identify were of duiker, bushbuck, reedbuck, bushpig and warthog, rabbit and various birds. No traces of sable in the camps, but for obvious reasons when a sable is killed, the evidence must be eliminated. In any case the snare traps don't make distinction among prey, and most of the natural water holes we visited were totally trapped, surrounded by trap lines, some of which using 6mt long poles, clearly design to catch large antelopes (sable or roan).

Some of the poaching in Luando seems to be well organized, and we still managed to set on fire some of those poaching camps. Although this was alarming, we have since been in close consultation with the military, and some actions are already being prepared with them to tackle this situation.

By any standards the operation was an utter success. We found, darted, handled and transported more animals than

we had hoped for; there was not one single animal seen that we wanted to dart and ended up failing to; all the animals we wanted to translocate we did; there was not one single injury on people or animals to report; there is not one single decision made during those three weeks, that I regret; nothing went wrong – it was simply the perfect job! Of course that for this remarkable outcome all participants and partners contributed somehow, but notably the much impressive piloting skills of Barney O'Hara and the remarkable veterinarian expertise of Pete Morkel, they both proved to be the right people for the job – a winning team no doubt.

The funding for this operation was made possible by a grant from Block 15 (Esso - operator, Sonangol - concessionaire, and partners), although it had been prepared since 2007 and started then with a grant from TUSK Trust. We must now prepare for a new level of responsibility, as the animals in Cangandala now require a much more demanding and intense management, and the same applies to Luando. The Government is also now becoming ever more active, and we expect management structures to be appointed and deployed to both reserves soon.



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## Zimbabwe Trying to Stop Rhino Poaching

According to CITES the rhino poaching situation is particularly bad in Zimbabwe. Raoul du Toit of the Lowveld Rhino Trust says that reasons are in "part the national situation in Zimbabwe where there is reduced law enforcement and [another] part of it is the growing demand for rhino horn, the growing Chinese and Vietnamese footprint in Africa and the fact that the markets are now really fueling poaching in a very aggressive way." Du Toit added that Zimbabwe had seemingly got on top of the situation when a similar surge in poaching happened in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He said the rhino population had actually increased, but all the good work is being undone and the falling rhino numbers are once again a cause for great concern. He put the number of rhino poached in Zimbabwe since 2006 at as high as 250. National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority Director General Morris Mtsambiwi agreed the situation is a cause for concern, but said an Emergency Rhino Protection Plan has been put into place to counter the poachers. He says his department; the police, the army and rangers from wildlife conservancies are involved in the program, which he says has been successful. He pointed to the killing of six poachers since the beginning of the year as proof of action being taken, but he said the country's economic problems are hindering a more effective response to the poaching. Mtsambiwi said that some Zimbabweans, including those in position of authority, are involved in the poaching. He admitted some rangers from his own department were arrested for their involvement. In a recent article in the local press two Cabinet ministers from Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF Party are named for being investigated for poaching. Lowveld Rhino Trust's du Toit also blamed the courts for not being harsh enough on those poachers captured alive for sentences to act as a deterrent, but Mtsambiwi says his department is continually engaging judicial officials and the situation is changing.

Du Toit and Mtsambiwi agree that while the rhino gets most of the attention because it is endangered, wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe in general is facing many challenges. Du Toit said Zimbabwe once had what he described as a proud record in conservation, but the country is compromising some of its own principles. He said wild dogs, which are also endangered, are also under threat as they get caught in snares set up by people hunting for meat. Of the animals that do not seem to be attracting that much attention he singled out the zebra. He explains, "What we have seen particularly in southern Zimbabwe is growing commercial poaching of zebra for their hide. Those hides are smuggled across the Limpopo river to South Africa and marketed in South Africa and exported from South Africa to European markets at pretty high values." Conservation groups also blame the settlement of landless Zimbabweans in wildlife conservancies under the country's land-reform program for the decline in wildlife conservation. Mtsambiwi admitted this had caused problems, but it is now being remedied.

## Community based natural resource management in Zimbabwe: the experience of CAMPFIRE

Russell Taylor

### Abstract

Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) is a long-term programmatic approach to rural development that uses wildlife and other natural resources as a mechanism for promoting devolved rural institutions and improved governance and livelihoods.

The cornerstone of CAMPFIRE is the right to manage, use, dispose of, and benefit from these resources. Between 1989 and 2006, CAMPFIRE income, mostly from high valued safari hunting, totalled nearly USD\$ 30 million, of which 52% was allocated to sub-district wards and villages for community projects and household benefits. Whilst a number of assumptions underlying the success of CAMPFIRE as an innovative model for CBNRM have yet to be met, CAMPFIRE confirms the concept that devolving responsibility and accountability for natural resource management can be highly effective for the collective and participatory management of such resources.

Elephant numbers in CAMPFIRE areas have increased and buffalo numbers are either stable or decreased slightly during the life of the programme. However, offtake quotas for these two species have increased with a concomitant decline in trophy quality. Although the amount of wildlife habitat diminished after 1980, following the commencement of CAMPFIRE the rate of habitat loss slowed down and in some specific instances was even reversed. More recently there has been increased pressure on habitats and other natural resources as a consequence of deteriorating socio-economic conditions in the country. Where devolution has been successful, promising results have been achieved and the recent acceptance and implementation of direct payments to communities is probably the most significant development since 2000.

That this has happened can be attributed to CAMPFIRE enabling communities to maximize their roles within the existing set of rules, and by so doing, allowing these rules to be challenged. Donor (73%) and government (27%) investments into the programme amounted to \$35 million during the period 1989 to 2003. Since 2003 however, donor funding has been reduced to <\$600,000 over the past 5 years.

Springer Netherlands, ISSN 0960-3115 (Print) 1572-9710 (Online) Biodiversity and Conservation [Volume 18, Number 10 / September, 2009](#), DOI 10.1007/s10531-009-9612-8

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## News from Africa

### DR Congo

An analysis by TRAFFIC seeks to address priority bushmeat trade, livelihood and food security issues in Africa. Bushmeat trade is one that provokes stronger emotions than any other aspect of wildlife trade; most people recoil from images of the severed hands or heads of Great Apes, which look all too human. Yet more than 34 million people living in Africa's Congo Basin depend on wildlife as their significant and direct source of protein. More than one million tons of bushmeat are consumed per year in the Democratic Republic of Congo alone. Agricultural food production in this region has not increased significantly throughout the last 40 years, so that many rural societies still depend on wildlife resources. [Full story](#)

### Kenya

Kenya's lion are suffering one of the most startling population collapses in the world. Losing more than 100 from the total every year for the last 7 years, there are only 2,000 wild lions remaining in all of Kenya, and experts fear they could be extinct there within 10 years. Habitat destruction and other environmental factors are key to the erosion of their numbers. Mounting conflict between the human and lion populations is also a problem. The Kenyan Wildlife Service estimates the lions will be gone within 20 years if nothing is done. But Lawrence Frank, a researcher from the University of California, Berkeley, says 10 years is the more accurate estimate, due to a host of factors. "Under current policy, there is no way for rural people to benefit from wildlife," says Frank. "They get essentially no income from tourism, and the only other potential source of wildlife income – carefully regulated, high-paying trophy hunting – is prevented by the financial influence of American and British animal-rights lobbies."

### Kenya

Elephants in Kenya are changing woody to grassland habitats and species that thrive in woody areas, such as giraffe, lesser kudu are at risk and impala suffer. Kenya's wild animal population is dying off at the same rate inside protected parks as outside – 40 per cent in 20 years and Kenyan scientists conclude that a radical review of the country's conservation policies was needed. Dr David Western, founder of the African Conservation Centre in Nairobi, published a paper in the online science journal PLoS One, reviewing 30 years of wildlife data and concluded that the "parks in Kenya were set aside in areas where people saw large aggregations of animals and typically these were the areas where animals congregated during the dry seasons," he said. "They ignored seasonal migrations because people didn't know where these animals migrated to, in many cases."

### Malawi

A private reserve adjacent to Lengwe National Park measuring less than 2,500 acres, and fenced, due to issues with wildlife conservation, is home to more than 300 nyala, including a concentration of mature bulls that must be removed for game

management reasons. Hunting has now been permitted.  
*Barbara Crown, The Hunting Report*

### Mozambique

At least 30 people have been killed by wild animals while 24 others sustained minor to severe injuries in a number of communities in the central province of Tete, in the first half of 2009. Over the past two years, incursions of wild animals on the fields and villages have shown a growing trend, which translates in loss of lives and destruction of property. 'Most of the people were killed by elephants, crocodiles and hyenas in the regions of Mussenguedzi, Bawa and Daqui. The program Tchuma Tchato, a community-based natural resource and wildlife management, is facing a number of difficulties due to a shortage of material and financial resources.

### Namibia

Over 60 volunteers counted wildlife during the Waterberg Conservancies' 14th annual waterhole count. The game count assists in management of Namibia's wildlife. The game count numbers assist conservancy members with their cooperative wildlife management plans and are presented to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET).

### Namibia

Scores of leading scientists, professionals and hunting industry representatives from 20 countries met in Windhoek to exchange the latest research and information on the role of hunting on ecology and the economy organized by the World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting Activities (WFSA. yesterday, Minister of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture Reverend Willem Konjore opened the WFSA symposium. Konjore said, "A strong wildlife industry has been created. Together with tourism, it has become a major contributor to the national economy." 26 presentations discussed technical reports, data on environmental and economic benefits and method of wildlife management and new concepts concerning the roles of hunting. The WFSA is an association of hunting, sport shooting and firearms industry trade organizations. Founded in 1996, WFSA represents 1 million sport shooters throughout the world and was recognized by the United Nations as a non-governmental organization in 1998.

### Niger

The giraffe population in Niger is the last representative of the *peralta* sub-species which lived throughout West Africa. Protected since the 1970s, giraffes cohabit with humans in cultivated landscapes, but the relationship between farmers and giraffes has deteriorated with the expansion of cultivated land and that of the giraffe population, with reported cases of giraffes damaging crops. The vast majority of farmers consider giraffes to be rather a problem in spite of tourism revenues.

### Rwanda

A new policy to govern wildlife conservation and management has been drafted and will be presented to Cabinet for approval.. Once finalized, the policy is expected to tackle the

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### News from Africa

challenges facing the sector, highlight strategies of protecting the country's wildlife and streamline the sharing of benefits from the sector.

#### South Africa

The government is assessing what should be done with at least 3,000 captive lions after a June court ruling that effectively ended the so-called canned hunting industry. An appeal against the ruling made by the Predators Association was heard on Sept. 14. Canned hunting is "a reprehensible practice and the judgment will ensure that this practice will indeed come to an end," the Department of Environmental Affairs said in a written response to questions in Parliament in Cape Town. A study on the captive breeding of lions "is expected soon. The department cannot speculate on the fate of the lions." The study found about 2,196 lions living in captivity in the North West province and another 800 in the Free State. Data from the country's other seven provinces is still being collated.

#### South Africa

The state's bungling with the application of the suspect Firearms Act received another blow when the Western Cape High Court gave Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa 90 days to draw up guidelines for compensation for firearms surrendered under the gun control law. The ruling could result in payouts totaling millions of Rand for gun owners who have handed in weapons since 2004.

#### South Sudan

Conservationists of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the semi-autonomous southern government have placed satellite and radio collars on animals in south Sudan to unravel patterns of little-understood mass antelope migrations. Nine elephants, 12 tiang antelopes and 12 white-eared kob antelopes were anesthetized from a helicopter and then collared. Surveys in 2007 and 2008 surprised with estimates of more than 753,000 white eared kob, more than 278,600 Mongalla gazelle and 155,460 tiang antelope, among others. These estimates would make the south's migrations as impressive as the wildebeest migrations in Tanzania and Kenya. South Sudan's tourism sector brought in revenues of about \$1.5 million in the pre-war 1970s, mostly from hunting, which has been banned to allow other ravaged populations such as buffalo and giraffe to recover. The south has 13 game reserves and six parks, including one of 20,000 square kilometers, but these are largely unadministered.

#### Tanzania

Tanzania's Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and the Tanzania Hunting Operators Association (TAHOA) have passed a resolution imposing welcome restrictions on lion hunting to encourage trophy-hunting of lion of six years or older. While the taking of a five-year-old lion will be tolerated, younger lions will not be exportable and will incur a \$5,000 penalty and the PH responsible may lose his license. If lion less than four years old are taken, the professional hunter will lose his PH license. Lions determined to be less than five years old will no

longer be exportable from Tanzania. Many Tanzanian operators have been employing the six-year rule for the last few years, many others have not, leading to this regulatory measure. Conservation Force's book, [A Hunter's Guide to Aging Lions in Eastern and Southern Africa](#) is a valuable field guide to judging lions in the bush. It's available from *The Hunting Report* for \$16.95.

#### Tanzania

Professional Hunter Godson Saitabau has been trampled and killed by a cow elephant with a calf while guiding a client in Tanzania. Apparently, the client and tracker were unharmed. The accident took place in the Mahenge Open Area.

#### Tanzania

Members of communities surrounding Ikongoro and Grumeti game reserves have asked the Government to revoke contracts entered between their local government authorities and wildlife investors. The Kunzugu and Hunyari villagers said the rapport between them and game wardens of Grumeti Game Reserve was not good. They added that the villagers are prohibited from driving their livestock to a river along the border with the game reserve. The villagers used the game reserve buffer zone to graze their livestock.

#### Zimbabwe

Organized syndicates of poachers are killing wildlife in Zimbabwe's animal parks. Commercial poachers mainly target elephants and rhinos for their horns, and giraffe and zebra for their skins. Poor subsistence poachers who are mostly locals use wire snares to capture plains game for meat. Areas hardest hit by rhino poachers are Lake Chivero, near Harare, and parks in the central, western and south-eastern parts of the country. Rhino horns and elephant tusks are smuggled to South Africa, Europe and China, while zebra and giraffe skins are sold in South Africa. Morris Mtsambiwa, the director general of Zimbabwe's Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, recently said "Rhino poaching has put Zimbabwe in the spotlight within the framework of Cites; rhino poaching is now becoming a very serious problem for us." The International Rhino Federation, a conservation group based in Florida, said eight poachers had been killed this year. Raoul du Toit, the director of Zimbabwe's Lowveld Rhino Trust, told the International Rhino Foundation website recently: "In the Midlands Conservancy, for example, the black rhino population has declined from 45 a few years ago to about five animals now."

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For hunter-conservationists and all people who are interested in the conservation, management and the sustainable use of Africa's wild natural resources.

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## Rhino News

### South Africa

Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife reported that on Saturday 22 August 2009 a very successful auction of 22 white rhinos brought in a total of R3.7 million. The 22 white rhinos are all surplus to the needs of the various protected areas in which they occur. The prices were about 22% lower than those of the May game auction. The average price per rhino on this sale was R168,318 compared to the average price on the May 2009 sale which was R215,375. The two auctions that Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife holds annually - the mixed game auction in May and the rhino auction in August - are primarily biodiversity management tools and secondarily a source of finance.

### South Africa

Two suspects from the Lumbi area between Ulundi and Melmoth were arrested on Thursday 20 August 2009 during investigations and follow-up operations with the SAPS Organized Crime Unit from Richards Bay in connection with the spate of rhino poaching incidents in the area. During this operation ammunition and fire-arms were also recovered. KZN has been plagued by a sudden upsurge of rhino poaching incidents with protected areas managed by EKZNW losing 14 white rhino this year and private game reserves losing five. The problem is not unique to KZN as other protected areas in South Africa have also been targeted leading the CEO of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Dr Bandile Mkhize to note that this appeared to be a syndicated attack on the rhino stocks of South Africa.

### South Africa

In a major breakthrough in the current spate of rhino poaching in Zululand Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) reports that Hluhluwe-Imfolozi field rangers carried out a highly successful operation with SAPS on 26 August 2009 that resulted in the arrest of four suspects caught with a .303 rifle and two freshly taken rhino horns in their vehicle.

### South Africa

The environment department says all rhinos and rhino horns must now be microchipped to deter poachers. The measure is contained in the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, which tightens regulations on rhino hunting and export of their horns. The DEAT said in a statement that horns already in private possession must also be registered at the owner's expense.

### South Africa

ID microchips for all rhinos and rhino horns and the military guarding the porous border near Kruger National Park plus more funds spent on rangers and anti-crime measures are some actions to protect South Africa's rhinos. "Poachers must beware," South African National Parks head David Mabunda said in a statement announcing the \$250,000 funding boost. "This is a war we plan on winning." World trade in illegal rhino horns is nearing a 15-year-high, according to a TRAFFIC report.

### Zimbabwe

Some 50 rhino have already been taken in 2009, against 120 slaughtered last year to reap between 3 and 4 kg of horn per animal; the carcass is wasted. Zimbabwe's rhinoceros population is now down to about 350. Poaching activity involving Zimbabwean politicians, including ministers Emmerson Mnangagwa and Webster Shamu, was uncovered, but the police docket against them mysteriously disappeared. Police and army personnel have turned poacher too. Zimbabwe's fragile unity government has hardly murmured a word about this looting of its wildlife heritage. There is no condemnation and, most certainly, there will be no prosecutions of that hallowed political fraternity or its minions feeding from the same trough. For the rhinoceros time has actually run out.

## Rhino News - Latest newsletter of the Rhino Resource Centre available

During the past quarter over 250 new references to books and papers about the five species of rhinos living in Africa and Asia have been added including the new studbook for *Rhinoceros unicornis* kept by the Basel Zoo, as well as six dissertations or theses by students in different countries. The latest issue of *Pachyderm* (no. 45) was published with a great selection of papers on elephants and rhinos. There are papers issued for the CITES 58th meeting of the Standing Committee, with a detailed paper on current needs in rhino conservation. Download in pdf format [here](#)

### DNA barcodes could assist tracking of illegal bushmeat

Researchers say that a simple genetic test called DNA barcoding can distinguish many wildlife species, offering a possible way to identify illegal animal products. Bushmeat is now exported across the world, with illegal trade estimated at \$5 billion to \$8 billion per year. The researchers analyzed specimens of species from Africa and South America, including antelope, monkeys, alligators, and crocodiles. They were able to extract high-quality genetic data from 88 percent of their samples, even specimens that were more than two decades old. Closely related species showed an average of 9.8 percent difference in a key gene fragment, the team reports in *Conservation Genetics*. Investigators could check for these unique DNA sequences, or barcodes, to accurately identify wildlife products from endangered species, the authors say. The team is now developing a test that would allow even more degraded samples to be analyzed.

**Source:** Eaton, M. et al. (2009). Barcoding bushmeat: molecular identification of Central African and South American harvested vertebrates *Conservation Genetics* DOI: [10.1007/s10592-009-9967-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10592-009-9967-0)

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# Spiral Horn Antelope Club: Nile Bushbuck

Peter Flack

I have an apology to make. Last year I wrote an article on the Nile bushbuck I had seen and hunted in both the south and north of Uganda. I wrote that, although I had heard that they looked alike, they were, in fact, the same. I was too quick on the trigger and placed my observations on the photographs I had taken. The only excuse that I can offer in my defense was that I had shot one of the animals at last light and my photograph was not very distinct. Last week, however, I received the mounts and skins back from my taxidermist of both the bushbuck I had successfully hunted, one from each area and, on a closer and more careful examination, there seems to be no doubt that the animals from the north and south differ in a material way from one another. The bushbuck from in and around Lake Albert in the northwest have two harnesses, one along the bottom of the ribcage (much like the harnessed bushbuck from West Africa) and another harness, thinner, shorter and higher up on the ribcage like the Abyssinian bushbuck from Ethiopia. Both of these bushbuck specimens, however, have four to five faint white stripes running vertically down the ribcage (again just like the harnessed bushbuck) and show almost no sign of a chevron across the nose which is exactly the same as both the Abyssinian and harnessed bushbucks.

The bushbuck from around Lake Mburo in the southwest of the country lack both these harnesses and look very similar to the Masai bushbuck or East African bushbuck although more uniformly tan in color. Finally, although I am much less certain on this point, those from the northwest seem to be a brighter and more reddish tan in color than those from the southwest. Having said all this, however, I want to avoid falling into the trap of making a definitive judgment based on an examination of too few species in too small an area and, therefore, must qualify what I have said above and state that it is based on seeing a total of 11 bushbuck in the southwest over a period of ten days and a similar number over a similar period in the northwest. As more and more people hunt Uganda, I would be most interested to hear from those who are successful on bushbuck and would like to compare their findings to mine.

## Wildlife in a Changing World

Vié, J.-C., Hilton-Taylor, C. and Stuart, S.N. (eds)(2009). *Wildlife in a Changing World – An Analysis of the 2008 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. Gland, Switzerland. 180pp

An analysis of the 2008 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. Beginning with an explanation of the IUCN Red List as a key conservation tool, it goes on to discuss the state of the world's species and provides the latest information on the patterns of species facing extinction in some of the most important ecosystems in the world, highlighting the reasons behind their declining status. Order a copy or download a pdf version [here](#)

# Vulture Restaurants

Kerri Wolter

## What is a vulture restaurant?

A vulture restaurant is a safe feeding site where animal carcasses, both domestic and wild animals of any shape or size, are provided as an artificial food source for vultures on a regular basis. This practice not only serves to assist in the continued survival of our vultures, but also increases the awareness of the vultures' plight by involving communities throughout a large part of the vultures' home range.



## Background

Although vulture restaurants can improve the wellbeing of vulture colonies throughout South Africa, the recent crash in India's vulture population has raised major safety concerns on the practice of allowing vultures access to carcasses with chemical residues and/or lead. Carcasses at restaurants or left in the veld (by farmers) can be from animals treated with a veterinary drug, for a particular illness, and has thus raised the question: If diclofenac, a rather innocuous veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agent could lead to a 98% vulture declines, what damage could other toxic compound such as the organophosphorus cause? (Swan et al., 2006)

Even the influence of a simple lead bullet is not known. Due to the costs of euthanasia, many farmers and veterinarians routinely put down animals with a lead bullet to the head. In the case of hunted wildlife, this could include numerous shots, of which one is often to the heart. With lead toxicity known to be a problem for other raptor and vulture species exposed to lead shot in carrion, the effects of lead exposure also requires clarification in our birds (Garcia-Fernandez et al., 1920; Adaudi et al., 1990; Mateo et al., 1997; Platt et al., 1999; Clark and Scheuhammer, 2003). Because vultures congregate at carcasses and vulture restaurants, significant proportions of the population can be exposed to whatever residues there may be in the carcasses. As this is an emerging hi-tech man-created situation, it is our responsibility to be pro-active in minimising this potentially devastating threat to the free-ranging vulture populations in southern Africa.

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Vulture Restaurants

#### What not to feed:

- Body parts or flesh through which a bullet may have passed or lodged. cut off the animal head or part where the bullet went through as well as the surrounding flesh where the bullet could have fragmented.
- Meat/carcasses which have not been free of all medication for at least one week before the animal died.
- Carcasses previously treated with flunixin (Finadyne<sup>®</sup>, Cronyxin<sup>®</sup> and Pyroflam<sup>®</sup>) or ketoprofen (Ketofen<sup>®</sup>) or phenylbutazone (Tomanol<sup>®</sup>, Phenylarthritis<sup>®</sup>, Equipalazone<sup>®</sup> or Fenylbutazone<sup>®</sup>).
- Carcasses that were euthanased with pentobarbitone (Euthanase<sup>®</sup> and Euthapent<sup>®</sup>)
- Game carcass that died following drug immobilizing e.g. M99<sup>®</sup>, Zoletil<sup>®</sup>, Dormicum
- Carcasses that were recently treated for ticks or for tick-bite fever (Redwater)

If there is any uncertainty about the quality of a carcass, it is recommended that the liver and kidneys be removed and destroyed prior to placing out the carcass, as these organs often contain the highest concentrations of deleterious drugs. While this will reduce the likelihood of toxicity, euthanasia agents and the capture drugs might still be toxic in the meat and in this case the carcass is best not offered to the birds.

For more information contact Kerri Wolter  
[kerri.wolter@gmail.com](mailto:kerri.wolter@gmail.com) Phone 27-(0)82-808-5113

## Watching Wildlife With White People

Brendan Borrell

At about 5:30 in the morning, I was idling at a stoplight and squinting to read the tiny print on my map when the white chap next to me rolled down the window of his beige Land Rover. Two Europeans were seated on the safari seats behind him with cameras already strapped to their necks. "Follow me!" he shouted.

"Going to—er—Pumbi?" I said, having no idea what the name meant much less which of the region's many tribal languages it came from: Xitsonga, siSwati, Sesotho, Tshivenda, isiZulu, Setswana ... "Numbi," he corrected. "Come on!"

The light turned green, and we headed north to the glorious gates of Kruger National Park, a wilderness that stretches for nearly 200 miles along the Mozambique border and covers an area the size of Switzerland, making it South Africa's largest, most-profitable, and best-known national park.

The sky was glowing pink as we passed the rundown houses and informal settlements packed tighter than a weaver bird's nest along the park's southwestern boundary. I was anxious to get inside the gates before sunrise so I'd have the best chance of spotting a leopard—the last of the "Big 5" game ani-

mals I was hoping to cross off my bucket list. Unfortunately my friends and I were stuck on a one-lane highway behind a string of moaning, belching buses that seemed to pull over every 10 feet to pack in another 50 villagers. The black folks were going to work, and we were going on safari.

I'd been in South Africa for almost a month now—surviving the young democracy's third presidential election—and race was never far from my mind. Although I'd come to learn about wildlife, apartheid has left its footprint on the geography of this country, from the walled white enclaves that surround every urban center to the sad townships built to house a black work force pried from the countryside. Kruger National Park remains one of the most palpable reminders of the legacy of the white man in Africa.

The area was once the domain of hunter-gatherers, but in 1898 Boer president Paul Kruger—aghast at the decline of available hunting game—established a reserve in what is now the southern portion of the park. By 1926, it had tripled in size, as locals were evicted from their land and denied access to its firewood, wildlife, and water. By the 1950s, blacks had been banned even from visiting the area or any other national park in South Africa. (Some lingered for a few years to sell trinkets at Skukuza, the resort-like camp that sits at Kruger's center—until they, too, were beaten and chased away. Today, Kruger National Park employs about 4,000 people, but more than 2 million others now live along its boundaries.

A black security guard was manning the Numbi gate on the morning that I arrived. I'd headed inside the ranger station to pay my entrance fee and as I was returning to my rental car he called me over. He reminded me that the speed limit in the park was 50 kmh on paved roads and slower on dirt tracks, and then began doling out unsolicited advice on how I might best enjoy my visit to the park. I ought to spend my morning at a nearby water hole, he said, where I was bound to see antelope, hippos, and maybe elephants. It was information I'd already heard in the station, but I nodded and smiled as he carried on his monologue. Finally, when I began to turn away, the gate-lifter leaned in to me and said, "You don't have any food in the car, do you?"

For a moment, I thought he might be warning me about baboons, which apparently can be quite fearless when it comes to tuna sandwiches or smoked oysters. Then he placed the palm of his hand on his stomach, and I knew what he meant.

The eviction and exclusion of indigenous people from nature reserves is not just an African phenomenon, of course. Historian Mark Bowie, in a new book called *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-Year Conflict Between Global Conservation and Native Peoples*, opens one chapter with a description of how photographer Ansel Adams meticulously avoided capturing images of local Miwok Indians in Yosemite Valley. Indeed, early preservationists saw humans as a disturbance to nature and felt they should no longer be allowed to reside within their national park borders. The re-appropriation of wilderness continues today in regions like the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana, where, according to Survival International, the bushmen have been relocated—and denied their water and hunting rights—to make room for tourists and a diamond mine.

At Kruger, the environmental impact of mass tourism through the paving of roads and the fencing camps that can

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Watching Wildlife with White People

accommodate thousands of people a day likely exceeds that of the park's original inhabitants. Still, Kruger's 800,000 visitors every year bring in \$29 million, making it one of South Africa's only national parks run at a profit. And since many of the other reserves are too small for viable populations of elephants, rhinos, or wild dogs, Kruger may well be the country's greatest achievement at wildlife conservation. But racial inequities are chipping away at popular support for conservation efforts. The apartheid laws that kept black tourists from visiting Kruger have, of course, been defunct for many years now, and the new government has installed blacks in senior leadership positions at the park. Still, the only times I saw a black face during my visit was at the gas pump or behind a counter at the Wooden Banana snack shop—never on a tour. Although speakers of the "white languages"—English and Afrikaans—represent 21 percent of the population, they account for 94 percent of the park's visitors. Locals pay just \$4 to enter the park (compared with \$16 for foreigners), but that's still about a day's salary for most of the country's blacks—if they have a job.

The Kruger tourist dollars aren't doing much to lift blacks out of poverty, either. More than 15 years after apartheid, the most profitable tour companies, lodges, and private game reserves surrounding the park are owned and operated by whites. Some displaced tribes are now getting a sliver of those profits, but the less fortunate farmers who live nearby must deal with rampaging elephants and roaming hyenas. According to a Kruger-commissioned study, most locals see more economic benefits in livestock and agriculture than parkland. Given that state of affairs, I guess it also shouldn't be much of a surprise that rhino poaching is on the rise throughout the country.

African wildlife conservation efforts are going to be effective over the long-term only if they go hand-in-hand with economic development. In Namibia, a country that was controlled by the South African apartheid government until 1990, the WWF and USAID have already set up 52 communal natural resource management programs that have boosted wildlife numbers, food security, and cash incomes over the last 15 years. Now South Africa, too, might finally be on the verge of updating its separate-but-equal approach to conservation. In 1995, the Makuleke community lodged a successful claim on land at Kruger's remote north end; as a result, the tribe receives payments from the park along with limited rights to use the area and manage facilities.

But most visitors like me stay in the south, where the fenced-in wildlife is more abundant. On my last day in the park, I was lucky enough to glimpse a leopard high in a tree just north of the Crocodile River on the park's southern boundary. You're not allowed out of your car, and pretty soon a string of eight or so vehicles had lined up behind me on the dirt road. The leopard, roused from his sleep, slipped into the bushes.

## Spiral Horn Antelope Club: Sitatunga DNA Analysis

Peter Flack

I recently came across an unusual sitatunga species in the far northwestern corner of Zambia, approximately four kilometers from the Congo border and 28 kilometers from Angola. This small animal, which the local Lunda tribe calls, "Nakonga mvudi" or bushbuck type sitatunga, as opposed to simply, "mvudi", the normal Zambezi sitatunga found in the country, lives in fingers of rain forest along watercourses, far from the normal papyrus swamp habitat of the Zambezi sitatunga.

Being interested to know whether this animal, with a its spots and stripes, was a northern or forest sitatunga, a Zambezi or East African one, I took a sample and sent it off for analysis to Professor Terry Robinson, Head of the Evolutionary Genomics Group in the Department of Botany and Zoology at Stellenbosch University (Private Bag XI, Matieland 7602, South Africa). To my surprise, some weeks later, he advised me that they did not have sufficient sitatunga samples to compare against the sample with which I had provided him in order to reach a conclusion as to what type of sitatunga it might have been.

So, I would like to make an appeal to all SHAC members and anyone else who may successfully hunt a sitatunga in the future, to please send a sample to Professor Robinson. To do this, please take with you on your next safari, a scalpel, a pencil, a small, preferably flat, watertight container, a self sealing plastic bag, a piece of paper and some medicinal or plus 90% proof alcohol. Cut a small piece of flesh from the sitatunga, approximately one centimeter square and one millimeter thick, note the date, place, country where shot and type of sitatunga on the paper with the pencil (note that alcohol will not erase the graphite from the pencil lead), place the paper in the watertight container filled with alcohol along with the flesh, seal the container carefully in the plastic bag, post it to Professor Robinson at the address set out above and email me so that I can follow up receipt of your sample.

In time, this will help enormously in the study of these shy and secretive animals and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you contributed in a meaningful way to advancing the understanding of them. Thank you so much.

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## The strategic pillars of communal natural resource management: benefit, empowerment and conservation

Marshall W. Murphree

### Abstract

Originally prepared as a keynote address for the 2008 La Tapoa Workshop on Natural Resource Management (NRM) and Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), this paper examines the Southern African experience in CBNRM over the past 20 years. From this experience the paper draws lessons on when and where CBNRM is appropriate, what can make it work, and what can make it work better. These lessons are discussed under the three categories of benefit, conservation and empowerment. Benefit is usually conceptualized in terms of financial revenue, and using a Zimbabwean case study the paper shows how in unusual circumstances this can be substantial. Normally, however, natural resource production can only supplement inputs from agriculture and other modes of production, and the paper warns against regarding CBNRM as a panacea for rural poverty. Benefit should also be understood in non-pecuniary terms, and when economic benefit is linked with authority and responsibility large increments in social capital can result. The conservation interests of donors are often perceived as being at odds with local perspectives, a perception which fails to take into consideration means-end-sequencing. A socially constructed stalemate often occurs when external agencies impose their agendas upon local populations, a stalemate which can be broken when communities are given the authority and responsibility necessary to create internally legitimate regimes. A new science which combines professional and civil inputs is required to achieve CBNRM's goal—empowered and dynamic local regimes integrated into larger scale systems of conservation and development.

Biodiversity and Conservation, Springer Netherlands, ISSN0960-3115 (Print) 1572-9710 (Online) [Volume 18, Number 10 / September, 2009](#) DOI 10.1007/s10531-009-9644-0

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## Death Warrant on Exotic Species

American Deer and Wildlife Alliance

A death warrant has issued on several exotic species, and ADWA needs your support to save these magnificent animals and preserve private property rights. Three antelope species —the scimitar-horned oryx, dama gazelle and addax — were the subject of special rules that were adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on September 2, 2005. Although these

three animals are classified as an endangered species, these special rules made it possible for owners of captive herds to continue to engage in activities including the purchase and sales of the animals. The special rules effectively made it possible for ranchers to breed and freely trade these animals on ranches across the United States without the USFWD permitting process. In fact, the program has been so widely successful that it now fuels a \$1.3 billion industry and thousands of jobs mostly in rural America.

The scimitar-horned oryx is a perfect example. Currently, there are thousands of these amazing animals living on preserves and ranches. The Exotic Wildlife Association has established a partnership with the renowned Sahara Conservation Fund and the two groups are working to reintroduce the species back into their native countries. The success of the game ranches in breeding rare and endangered species, like the scimitar-horned oryx, is an example of how private conservation can affect the worldwide preservation of such animals. Many endangered species are virtually extinct in their native lands, but are flourishing in the United States because ranchers are able to freely buy, sell and breed the animals. However, three years ago, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) filed a lawsuit to stop the special rules and the EWA and Safari Club International has fought the lawsuit ever since. In July 2009, a Federal judge ruled that the three species which are born and raised in the United States will not be exempted from their listing on the endangered species list.

As a result, ranchers who have owned and cared for these animals for years will be required to cease all breeding, transport, hunting or other management activities. If this ruling stands these three species will cease to have any value to breeders and could become extinct worldwide.

The ability to raise these animals for breeding or hunting purposes gave these animals a real value. In their native countries, these animals had no value and people did not care whether they became extinct. But members of ADWA, EWA, SCI and others do care. Ranchers and hunters brought these animals back from the brink of annihilation because the special rules exception gave these animals value. Without it, no one will invest in the animals' future. They will die and the anti's that started it all will just sit, watch and applaud their 'noble' deeds.

But in the end, what is the more heinous crime — allowing exotic animals to be bred, to grow in population and to eventually be managed through responsible culling, or to orchestrate a legal situation that leads to a planet-wide extinction and the species are lost forever? The American Deer & Wildlife Alliance urges all sportsmen, hunters and wildlife enthusiasts to contact their federal representative and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to voice their support for saving these magnificent animals.

<http://www.deerwildlifealliance.org/Death-Warrant-on-Exotic-Species.htm>

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## Poaching Crisis As Rhino Horn Demand Booms In Asia

An estimated three rhinos were illegally killed each month in all of Africa from 2000-05, out of a population of around 18,000. In contrast, 12 rhinoceroses now are being poached each month in South Africa and Zimbabwe alone, the three groups told the 58th meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Standing Committee this week in Geneva. "Illegal rhino horn trade to destinations in Asia is driving the killing, with growing evidence of involvement of Vietnamese, Chinese and Thai nationals in the illegal procurement and transport of rhino horn out of Africa," the briefing states. Meanwhile, rhino poaching is also problematic in Asia. About 10 rhinos have been poached in India and at least seven in Nepal since January alone—out of a combined population of only 2,400 endangered rhinos. "Rhinos are in a desperate situation," said Dr. Susan Lieberman, Director of the Species Programme, WWF-International. "This is the worst rhino poaching we have seen in many years and it is critical for governments to stand up and take action to stop this deadly threat to rhinos worldwide. It is time to crack down on organized criminal elements responsible for this trade, and to vastly increase assistance to range countries in their enforcement efforts."

Almost all rhino species are listed in CITES (the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) in Appendix I, which means that any international trade of any rhino parts for commercial purposes is illegal. "Increased demand for rhino horn, alongside a lack of law enforcement, a low level of prosecutions for poachers who are actually arrested and increasingly daring attempts by poachers and thieves to obtain the horn is proving to be too much for rhinos and some populations are seriously declining," said Steven Broad, Executive Director of TRAFFIC. The situation is particularly dire in Zimbabwe where such problems are threatening the success of more than a decade's work of bringing rhino populations back to healthy levels. For example, earlier this week a park ranger arrested with overwhelming evidence against him for having killed three rhinos in the Chipinge Safari Area, was acquitted without any satisfactory explanation for the verdict. Similarly, in September 2008, a gang of four Zimbabwean poachers who admitted to killing 18 rhinos were also freed in a failed judiciary process.

The briefing concludes that governments need "an accurate and up-to-date picture of the status, conservation and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses, as well as the factors driving the consumption of rhinoceros horn, so that firm international action can be taken to arrest this immediate threat to rhinoceros populations worldwide." "Rhino populations in both Africa and Asia are being seriously threatened by poaching and illegal trade," said Dr. Jane Smart, Director of IUCN's Biodiversity Conservation Group. "IUCN and its African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups are working hard to gather data and information on rhinos so that CITES parties can make informed decisions and ensure that rhinos are still here for generations to come."

Source: ScienceDaily

## News from Conservation Force

John Jackson III

Conservation Force is contesting trophy seizures and forfeitures in Federal District Courts from San Francisco and Los Angeles to New York. The first claims we filed were over four different leopard seizures in San Francisco that have evolved into three different federal court cases.

As we feared, the government has taken the legal position in San Francisco that any irregularity, including clerical errors, on permits or loss by third parties such as airlines renders that trophy contraband, which is illegal to possess or release. The government's position in the San Francisco case, set for hearing on 30 September, is that CAFRA does not apply to all trophies of listed species because it excludes contraband, and the trophies are contraband. If true, the "innocent owner defense" and "proportionality/excessive penalty" tests will not be available to hunters. It will take an Act of Congress to correct the injustice and the sooner the better. At worst, the cases across the country will demonstrate and showcase the problem. Until now, millions of dollars of trophies have been quietly forfeited while hunters have been misled to believe they were afforded protection of their interests by CAFRA and administrative remission proceedings. On the other hand, we hope to establish that clerical errors don't render trophies contraband like drugs and criminally obtained goods.

The negative attitude of the Agency we had gleaned has surfaced in the litigation. For example, the government is arguing that the purpose of the quota resolution adopted for leopard by CITES was intended to strictly limit trade, while we, on the other hand, view the adoption of quotas as a CITES attempt to facilitate trade and dispense with the need for the exporting and importing countries to make any further non-detriment finding. The quota resolutions actually state that those particular leopard populations are not in danger, that the hunting benefits them, and that importing authorities should permit the trade. Of course, leopards were not listed due to trophy trade in the first place, but it is the twisted view of those enforcing CITES in the field that we are contending with that trophy trade is disfavored. Moreover, the leopard in issue had both import and export permits demonstrating the trade was not detrimental and that it also enhanced the survival of the species. In other words, it was duplicatively approved trade.

We also have a growing number of cases where trophies have been seized for forfeiture because they were considered by the USF&WS Inspector upon entry to be crafted. That has ranged from elephant leg bones (not just ivory) that have been scrimshawed to tusks that have bases with a metal cap for support. How the Service can unilaterally change the listing of a species by declaring it not to be a trophy is beyond my imagination. It is now up to two or more New York Federal District Court Judges to decide in separate cases.

Source: Conservation Bulletin – The Hunting Report

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For hunter-conservationists and all people who are interested in the conservation, management and the sustainable use of Africa's wild natural resources.

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# Niassa Elephant Trophy Import Permits Denied

John Jackson III

On September 3, International Affairs of USF&WS denied the longstanding applications to import elephant hunting trophies from the Niassa Reserve of Mozambique. Both the Management and Scientific divisions made negative findings. The denials are a shock because Niassa is one of the most promising reserves in the world today with exemplary management. International Affairs only processed the longstanding permits in response to Conservation Force's Mozambique elephant lawsuit filed in March, 2009. Incredibly, the denial rests upon a Division of Scientific Authority (DSA) "general advice" dated April 8, 2005, which predated the opening of Niassa and the date of the two particular hunts in issue. In short, the DSA's CITES advice that it could not make a non-detriment finding did not consider the Niassa information attached to the permit application at all, nor could it because the advice was rendered before the Niassa hunting was opened or the application was made. The information about Niassa and where the hunts occurred seems to have been immaterial to the Service during the years the applications languished. Neither Division made any inquiry or effort. They did not even consider the application attachments.

The Division of Management Authority (DMA) also made a negative enhancement finding under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). DMA said that "[t]o enhance the survival of the species, the importation must be associated with activities that provide a direct benefit to the species being hunted. Such benefits could include the use of revenue generated by the hunt to support conservation projects or to manage the species. Other benefits that could result from activities that enhance the survival of the species include improving human-wildlife conflicts, anti-poaching efforts, or habitat conservation." Regrettably, the explanation was not applied in this case although elephant hunting in the Niassa Reserve and the immediately surrounding buffer zone is the epitome of every particular of that definition. DMA and DSA ignored the particulars of Niassa although with up-to-date findings, positive determinations should have been made.

The denial letter states, "[W]e realize it has taken much longer than usual to act on your application and apologize for the extreme delay in responding to your request." That is quite an admission for an agency being sued for taking too long. In reality, it took more than 3 years and a lawsuit. The scientific opinion itself was 5 years late when rendered and did not include Niassa or the 2005 and 2006 seasons when and where the applicants' hunts took place. No inquiry was made of the hunters or the Mozambique authorities about the hunt period or the hunt and applications were ignored until suit was filed.

The denial also rests upon August, 2007 USF&WS regulations that were not even in effect during the 2005 and 2006 hunts. Those regulations self-authorize the USF&WS to disregard the non-detriment finding made by Mozambique authorities and also self-authorize review of both the biological status and the management of the population rather than the

purpose of the imports. The failure to take into consideration the particular program and status of the elephant population in Niassa is exasperating. DMA and DSA chose to disregard Mozambique's quota and non-detriment finding lodged with CITES.

Niassa Reserve is managed as a standalone unit and forms part of an extremely large and continuous ecosystem with the Selous Reserve in Tanzania. The Reserve alone spans two provinces, is over 9 million acres and has between 13,000 and 16,000 elephant. It is separately managed by SRN (Society for the Reserve of Niassa) and was funding 83 game scouts in 2005 at 19 control outposts. Neither the outdated DSA negative non-detriment advice, nor the DMA negative enhancement determination treated Niassa as distinct. Rather, the permit application denial conspicuously disregards the improving status and exemplary management of elephant where and when the hunting took place, Niassa Reserve. The denial calls for more reliable national surveys of the elephant population, but ignores the Niassa state-of-the-art surveys completed every two years since 1999 that document a continuing elephant population increase. The elephant population has doubled over the past decade, but the denial makes no notice of it. Niassa has one of the best and most regulated elephant populations in the world. If the country-wide quota of 40 elephant were all taken in Niassa Reserve instead of across the whole country of Mozambique, the quota would be less than one-third of one percent of Niassa's elephant population alone. Moreover, Niassa had a quota of less than 10 of those on the national quota. Let them explain that to the Judge – the same Judge who heard the original elephant suit in the early 1990s.

So where does that leave us? We will amend the District of Columbia Federal Court lawsuit to change the allegations of failing to process the import permit applications into a claim alleging irrational, arbitrary and capricious denial of the applications. Second, we will continue our effort to downlist Mozambique elephant to Appendix II of CITES with an annotation that it is for trophy hunting purposes only, which would eliminate the need for import permits. If we are unable to do it timely for CITES CoP15, to be held in March 2010, that effort will have to wait three more years for CoP16. In the meantime, Mozambique is coincidentally planning a workshop to complete an up-to-date national action/management plan for the whole of the country, though that has just been delayed. That drafting workshop was scheduled for September and may have at least satisfied the persistent USF&WS demand for a more particularized action plan than the National Elephant Strategy adopted in 1999 which DMA states was just a "first step." Of course, that workshop is not expected to improve Niassa's management, which is already intensive and state-of-the-art.

In the interval, we can no longer recommend elephant hunting in the Niassa Reserve, much less anywhere in Mozambique. It may be four or more years before we can establish the import of elephant from anywhere within the country. Rest assured we are doing all that can be done. Please continue your support.

Source: Conservation Bulletin – The Hunting Report

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