



“SERVING THE HUNTER WHO TRAVELS”

“Hunting provides the principal incentive and revenue for conservation. Hence it is a force for conservation.”

Special To The Hunting Report World Conservation Force Bulletin

by John J. Jackson, III

□ News Analysis

Cats/Canids Bill Introduced; NRA To Push Hunting; And More

Great Cats and Rare Canids Act of 2004: A bill (HR. 4826) has been introduced in the US House of Representatives to provide conservation funding for foreign felids and canids that are at risk. It follows in the footsteps of the *African Elephant Conservation Act*, *Rhino-Tiger Conservation Act* and the *Primate Conservation Act*, with some important distinctions.

The bill has been introduced by Congressmen Clay Shaw (Republican – Florida), Tom Udall (Democrat – New Mexico) and John Tanner (Democrat – Tennessee). It has been referred to the Committee on Resources. The definition section specifies that its coverage includes lions, leopards, jaguars, cheetahs and other cats, but it expressly excludes tiger, which are already covered by the *Rhino-Tiger Conservation Act*. The canid section expressly includes African wild dog, gray wolf and Ethiopian wolf. Only US and Canadian wild felines and canines are excluded.

Unlike prior Acts, the bill expressly

authorizes, but does not mandate, the Secretary of Interior to “convene an advisory group . . . to assist in carrying out” the Act. The bill cites the fact that all wild felines (37 species) and 50 percent of wild canids (35 species) are listed or in need of protection.



This is just one in a line of funding Acts that have arisen because the US Endangered Species Act (ESA) does not provide the same benefits for recovery of foreign species that it does for domestic species. It is really piecemeal reform of the ESA. The first such Act,

the *African Elephant Conservation Act* (AECA), was actually drafted to be an amendment to the ESA, but was made a stand-alone law in final passage. Unlike the Acts that have followed it, the *African Elephant Conservation Act* expressly states that sport hunting of African elephant is not the cause of the decline of elephant and is an important conservation tool that benefits the species. The *African Elephant Conservation Act* included a prohibition against ivory imports (excepting trophies) that has not been in the Acts that have followed it or in the proposed *Great Cats and Rare Canids Act of 2004*. The pending measure must be monitored to insure that it remains a funding measure, and trophy import restrictions are not added at the last moment.

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NRA to the Rescue: The National Rifle Association (NRA) is by far the largest hunters’ organization in the world. It has more than two million hunters as members and has long been on the front

line in protecting hunters' interests, much more so than it is given credit. Now, the NRA has really stepped up to the plate to save hunting. It has formed a new program to *proactively* assume an even greater and more important role in protecting hunters' interests. It has formed *FREE HUNTERS, The National Hunting Club of America*.

The cost of a one-year membership is only \$15 for NRA members and \$19.85 for non-NRA members. You can become a member by calling 1-866-357-4868 (HUNT). The website is www.FreeHunters.org.

Members receive a magazine, *Free Hunters*, that will commence in September. It is only \$495 for a life membership. I've personally become a life member, and I recommend that course of action to anyone who supports hunting. The NRA is an uncompromising political advocate. *Fortune Magazine* has called the NRA the most influential lobby in the world. Its new, more focused dedication to saving hunting is wonderful news.

Initially, the NRA promises to: 1.) Push for more public hunting land for the average hunter that is so important to our political base; 2.) Reduce bureaucratic red tape of State and Federal agencies retarding hunting; and 3.) Promote passage of right-to-hunt constitutional amendments in all 50 states. It can and will give hunters representation that they have never had except in token form. Its focus on the bureaucratic red tape piling on from Federal and State agencies that is driving many hunters out of the sport is a worthy niche, as the regulatory maze grows more complex each season and little is being done about it. Agencies and anti-hunters have been beating on us. Now, our big brother is stepping into the ring.

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OWAA Askew: I attended the annual conference of the Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA) particularly to hear the pre-announced breakfast speech of NRA President Kayne Robinson about the NRA's *FREE HUNTERS* program. I was not disappointed at all, but the antagonism I witnessed against the NRA from the so-

called “hook and bullet” media causes me a great deal of concern.

In a two-hour open session with the media after the breakfast, it was open warfare on Kayne and the NRA. There were accusatory questions, credibility doubt tones and antagonism in nearly every question from the media participating, myself excluded. There was too little or no enthusiasm for the announcement that the NRA is accepting a greater responsibility and intends to weigh-in to protect hunters' interests with its clout and fortitude. A deep-seated antagonism overshadowed the good news! Reporters were more interested in taking free potshots at a perceived enemy. What a shock.

It is high time that we recognize the NRA and credit it for all that it does. Even if you don't agree with the NRA's position on assault weapons, firearms registration, or some other issue, those of us in the know fully appreciate how the NRA's uncompromising fights have greatly benefited hunters. Those organizations behind the assault weapons ban, gun registration laws and other threats *really* do want to *totally* eliminate all firearms and ammunition.

A second development arose that is even more disturbing. At the end of his breakfast speech, President Kayne Robinson reluctantly addressed a publication of the Sierra Club that was being widely circulated by the Sierra Club at the conference. The document contained direct attacks on the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, on NRA Board Member and Congressman Don Young (R-Alaska) and Congressman Larry Craig, as well as Conrad Burns and Richard Shelby. Kayne lamented that the four people “mentioned are dedicated hunters and leading supporters of hunting and of hunting lands and the Second Amendment.” (Conservation Force's note: They are more than leaders; they are the foremost Congressional advocates of hunting of our time.) He went on to warn that the officials the Sierra Club discussed favorably in the publication they were circulating at the conference were gun-ban candidates, and he advised the audience not to be fooled

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World Conservation Force Bulletin

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Publisher

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into voting for them. Note that he had not initiated the attack, but was responding to a written attack initiated and being circulated at the conference by the Sierra Club.

The real shocker is that, in an unprecedented move, the OWAA Board afterward voted 11 to 4 to issue a letter of “disappointment in your harsh criticism of fellow OWAA supporting member Sierra Club” to Kayne Robinson in what, in essence, was his defense of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus and the four leading Congressional advocates of hunting today.

Thankfully, a backlash against the Board letter has developed within OWAA. At this writing nearly 500 members of OWAA and a slew of OWAA past presidents have signed a petition to the OWAA Board to send a letter of apology to the NRA, yours truly included. A major rift may be developing within the OWAA, while little note is being made of the important fact that the NRA is stepping forward to aggressively save hunting. Shame on Kayne Robinson if he had not defended the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus and the four Congressional advocates of hunting. I suggest all of you let the NRA know that you stand behind it and appreciate what it does.

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Dallas Safari Club and Dallas Ecological Foundation: Dallas Safari Club and Dallas Ecological Foundation have supported Conservation Force from its inception. We would not be here if it were not for them and a few other loyal supporters. This year, DSC/

DEF have increased their support to fifty-thousand dollars (\$50,000) and asked that we act as their official representative during the numerous meetings and conferences we attend and to formally list them as partners in our written campaigns and notices. That we are proud to do. They are deserving of your support. Remember, these are two organizations that make their revenue count for the benefit of all.

They are responsible organizations, and they host one of the most



exciting and enjoyable hunting conventions in the world. This year’s *HATARI! Let Your Adventure Begin* is to be January 6-9 at the Dallas Market Hall. For more information, visit www.biggame.org; E-mail info@biggame.org; or contact Gray Thornton at 972-980-9800. Please let the folks at DSC/DEF know that you appreciate their support of Conservation Force. In turn, please support them.

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Tribute to Bob Fontana: There are some wonderful people who really count for something in this industry.

Bob Fontana was one of those. British Columbia suffered a tremendous loss when Bob was killed in July in a surprise attack by a Cape buffalo while on safari in Tanzania. His end epitomized a Capstick “death in the long grass.”

He was the past President of the Guide and Outfitters Association of British Columbia (GOABC) and a supporting member of Conservation Force. He had the charisma and following to set the course the GOABC sails today. He was a thinker, a leader and a doer. He had a personal vigor and acceptance of responsibility that set him apart to the benefit of British Columbia and the whole industry.

He was never afraid to confront the challenges and attacks on hunting. He had an appetite for life and its challenges many others shirk.

I first began working with Bob over a decade ago, when all bear hunting in British Columbia was under attack. We had a deep rapport because of his willingness to accept responsibility and to fight for what is right. He exemplified those that are somehow bigger than life because of the contribution they make and the leadership role they assume for the benefit of all others. His unique capacity to make and see a commitment through to the end makes his death unbelievable. Those of us who survive him can honor him by keeping up his fight to hunt grizzly bear in British Columbia. He was a spirited leader of men who fought passionately for what you and I believe in. – *John J. Jackson, III.*

Important CITES COP 13 Developments

■ The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and TRAFFIC are contracted by the CITES Secretariat to analyze and make recommendations on the Proposals for Conferences of the Parties (COPs). Theirs are generally the most influential and important analysis and recommendation. On July 29th, the Trade Specialist Group of the IUCN published its analysis for distribution to all the country Parties to CITES. On

August 4th, TRAFFIC published its recommendations. The following is a summary of those most relevant to hunters who travel.

Kenya’s Proposal to List Lion on Appendix I: Most importantly, the reviewers recognized the “Chardonnet” lion study as the most comprehensive and representative of the African lion’s status. The “Chardonnet” study is the one done for Conservation Force in 2002 that was largely funded by Con-

servation Force supporter Steven Chancellor. The reviewers point out that the “Chardonnet” study is of 144 distinct lion sub-populations, while the report Kenya cites in its proposal was admittedly not “complete” and only covered 100 of Africa’s lion sub-populations. The reviewers conclude that the lion population has not declined to the extent Kenya represented, so it does not meet the listing criteria for Appendix I.

The reviewers highlighted the unique importance of safari hunting if lions are to continue to survive beyond park borders, and they warn that importing countries are likely to obstruct import of trophies if they are required to issue import permits because of the proposed listing – regardless of quotas that Kenya suggests. TRAFFIC recommends rejection of the proposal, but recommends “an urgent assessment of trade in African lions under the Significant Trade Review process,” which would be initiated at the next CITES Animals Committee meeting, the date of which has not yet been set. That is a less risky alternative, but itself can be an onerous burden on range nations wishing to have safari hunting.

In truth, lion trade is low in those countries where lion numbers are low or poorly known, and it is clearly within sustainable limits where it occurs at higher levels. Trade is not the threat to lion, but it certainly can be a force for its conservation.

Transfer of Namibia’s Nile crocodile from Appendix I to Appendix II to allow export of hunting trophies: The reviewers pointed out that there is no population survey and estimate, but it is really a shared population with surrounding countries that have already been downlisted to Appendix II. It is a shared population, but there is not shared management as required. The intended quota should also be specified. One reviewer, the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group, seeks clarification on the proportion of the total revenue that would accrue to communities. TRAFFIC recommends the proposal be “rejected” unless additional management and status information is provided.

(Conservation Force’s Note: This may still pass. The problem with Namibian crocodile imports up to now for US hunters has been the US Fish & Wildlife Service’s refusal to allow CITES I animals to be imported without proof of “enhancement.” Our view is, for five trophies per year, how much documentation costs and bureaucratic red tape should be warranted? Conservation Force has been attempting to process Nile crocodile hunting trophy permits

for Namibia as a public service project. No USF&WS import permit should be required if Namibian crocodiles are downlisted to Appendix II.)

The United States’ proposal to delist bobcat from Appendix II: The reviewers found that the species should not be removed from Appendix II for look-alike reasons, though its population status does not warrant listing. They felt it was too similar in appearance to three other lynx species, and could



also be confused with the skins from a number of Latin American spotted cat species. TRAFFIC recommends rejection for look-alike reasons. Though its management is good, all wild cats in the world are listed.

South Africa’s proposal to allow commercial trade of elephant leather

Conservation Force Sponsor

The Hunting Report and Conservation Force would like to thank International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife (IGF) for generously agreeing to pay all of the costs associated with the publishing of this bulletin. IGF was created by Weatherby Award Winner H.I.H Prince Abdorreza of Iran 25 years ago. Initially called The International Foundation for the Conservation of Game, IGF was already promoting sustainable use of wildlife and conservation of biodiversity 15 years before the UN Rio Conference, which brought these matters to widespread public attention. The foundation has agreed to sponsor *Conservation Force Bulletin* in order to help international hunters keep abreast of hunting-related wildlife news. Conservation Force’s John J. Jackson, III, is a member of the board of IGF and Bertrand des Clers, its director, is a member of the Board of Directors of Conservation Force.



International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife

goods: The reviewers approve. “There is no evidence that trade in leather goods has any impact on South African elephant populations.” The failure to have included it in the Appendix II trade annotation for elephant in South Africa of COP 12 “appears to have been an error.” Elephant skin trade was allowed at COP 11 and erroneously dropped at COP 12. It should be noted that the African elephant was classified as “endangered” on the IUCN’s *Red List* in 1996, but that this year it is being reclassified to be only “vulnerable.” That is quite a change, but far more accurate. TRAFFIC accepts.

Zambia’s proposal for an export quota of 548 wild crocodile annually: The CITES Secretariat has issued a “preliminary assessment” of the proposal stating that Zambia does not need a special quota to export trophies. Conservation Force has formally requested from the USF&WS its position toward present trophy imports in light of the Secretariat’s opinion. The USF&WS has the matter under its own review.

The IUCN reviewers note that if a quota is necessary for trade, then the proposed “level of harvest” may be too high to be sustained from areas outside the protected area network, and that sufficient precautionary measures have not yet been developed to manage the harvest for the long-term benefit of Zambia. The Crocodile Specialist Group of IUCN that did much of the review states that “more information on harvest restrictions and management is required” and questions whether, for example, “the wild harvest will be subject to size limits.” It is also not clear what part of the quota is for commercial trade and what part is for trophies, according to the critical reviewers. The reviewers conclude that “the proposal appears to be for an excessive number of animals . . . but trusts that points raised can be clarified.” In effect, the reviewers are calling for Zambia to provide more information before the proposal is resolved at COP 13. TRAFFIC recommends rejection unless the quota of 548 wild crocodile is reduced and better management is specified. – *John J. Jackson, III.*