

AFRICAN INDABA

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Dedicated to the People and Wildlife of Africa

Editor's Notes

Dear Reader,

We are having a glorious and cold winter in Southern Africa and the hunting season has been kind to me, despite of a truck load full of work in the review of the CIC trophy scoring system. I barely managed to catch my breath after returning from a very interesting CIC General Assembly in Paris hosted graciously by Victor Scherrer, head of the French CIC delegation, and his able delegation members. You can read more about the CIC General Assembly on Page 6 and even more on the [CIC Website](#). Suffice it to say here that I had most interesting discussions with from people hailing from all over the globe. And I realized that I have to polish my rudimentary Russian – besides Africa and North America, this vast country stretching from eastern Europe to the shores of the Bering Sea has such a lot offer for the hunter, not only hunting, but also knowledge of wildlife species and conservation. Truly a unique country worth while exploring.

Closer to our own shores in Africa we are hit with a bevy of news – true, half-true and fabricated-emotional – about the situation of the rhinoceros species in southern Africa. The regular readers of African Indaba may recall that I have touched this topic quite frequently in the past. The recent media reports make it necessary to touch on it again.

You can read some accurate and unbiased details in the IUCN-WWF-TRAFFIC report presented to the CITES Standing Committee earlier this month on page 18. Poaching, illegal trafficking and even burglaries (i. e. in the rhino horn storage room of SA's Addo National Park) are rife and the hunting community must do whatever is in its power to cooperate with the national authorities and international agencies in order to put a stop to this. PHASA's president Peter Butland recently announced welcome and necessary measures to all PHASA members advising them not to "book and conduct hunts with nationals from Vietnam or other Far Eastern countries" until the government had "removed this abuse of the SA legal system." PHASA again rallied to the cause. Butland said evidence from enforcement and trade monitoring agencies show a direct link between Far Eastern syndicates and the export of rhino horn from recent legal rhino hunting by Vietnamese, rhino poaching on private and state land, cross-border smuggling and theft of rhino horn from stockpiles and museums. Butland continued stating that "we do not want to be part of anything that is illegal, that is linked to crime syndicates or to organized crime in the Far East.

It is of extreme concern to us." (compare also PHASA PR on pages 19 and 20). This development is indeed of grave concern, since it could undermine the future of South African professional hunting and game ranching. In fact the South African Conservation Model is being put at peril!

A recent case of two rhino shot at Dwesa Nature Reserve (Eastern Cape Parks Board) highlights the problem. The "trophies" have been exported to Vietnam. The outfitter who was involved in the controversial hunt is quite wrong with his published post-hunt statement that "*[my] two Vietnamese clients could now do 'anything' with the horns. They can put them on the wall or sell them or make them into dagger handles – whatever they want.*" As matter of fact the CITES regulations DO NOT allow that at all. Any parts of the trophy can be only used as just that – as personal hunting trophies – and no sale is allowed! Of course it would also fall into the moral responsibility of the outfitter to make sure that his clients are true bona-fide hunters, and not draw on, as the outfitter in question, the cheap excuse "*that is the job of the authorities when they receive the application and decide whether to issue the permit.*"

The blistering attacks launched on the Kruger National Park authorities by some notorious animal rights groups are just

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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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July CITES Briefing on Rhino

trol framework for the country's sport hunting policy for white rhinoceros in February 2009 (including limiting each hunter to only one rhino a year); and a series of arrests of individuals engaged in illicit rhinoceros killing and trade. In fact South Africa's law enforcement should be commended for their focused and innovative attention to this serious conservation challenge.

Additional measures, however, are needed, such as the implementation of a precautionary annual national white rhinoceros hunting quota (whether it involves foreign nationals or local citizens), so that all hunts can be tracked within an accountable and transparent system irrespective of whether or not application is being made to export the trophies. South Africa should also be encouraged to implement tighter controls on the issuance of rhinoceros horn trophy export permits and establish a policy whereby sport-hunted trophies are only allowed to be exported to countries which have policies in place to register and track the ownership of such trophies and otherwise ensure that they will not be used for commercial purposes. Nationals from any country failing to demonstrate such policies should be precluded from engaging in sport hunting of rhinoceros in South Africa.

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the proportion of mortalities due to illegal killing has been alarmingly high with 79% of recorded black and white rhinoceros mortalities from January 2003 to June 2006 being attributed to poaching and snaring. Rhinoceros numbers in Zimbabwe are declining, with official statistics indicating that black rhinoceros numbers declined slightly from the end of 2005 to the end of 2007. AfRSG is working together with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority to review numbers and trends. Indications are that both white and black rhinoceros numbers have continued to decline through 2008, and the implication of this is that poaching losses are likely to have been higher than originally thought, assuming a conservative net underlying annual population growth rate including natural mortalities since 2002. Recorded losses in the Lowveld Conservancies alone over this period number 70 rhinoceroses and reported losses have also been high in the Midlands. TRAFFIC showed that the rate for illegal rhinoceros horn recovery in Zimbabwe from 2000-2005 was <=13 %. This was very low compared with other range States. TRAFFIC also noted that Zimbabwe was (along with South Africa) the African range State with the greatest estimated net minimum flow of illegal horns out of the country over the period 2000-2005 and the situation has not improved since then.

This picture of increasing poaching, declining numbers and low levels of effective law enforcement by the Zimbabwean authorities increasingly threatens the success of more than a decade's work of bringing rhinoceros populations in Zimbabwe back up to healthy levels. The relevant Zimbabwean authorities urgently need to review the status and security of rhinoceroses in Zimbabwe and establish the current situation with regard to poaching levels; law enforcement effectiveness; prosecution success; illegal trade levels; the status and trends in Zimbabwe rhinoceros numbers; and the probable impact of poaching on individual rhinoceros populations and the country's overall population through demographic analysis.

AfRSG and TRAFFIC are involved in a process working with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority to review rhinoceros monitoring, numbers and trends and rhinoceros law enforcement issues as part of the CITES mandated CoP15 reporting process, and as part of the process of revising the Zimbabwe National Rhino Strategy. AfRSG and TRAFFIC have received exemplary cooperation from the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority in this regard.

CITES Decision 14.88 calls upon all African and Asian rhinoceros range States and Parties that have stocks of rhinoceros horns or rhinoceros horn derivatives to declare the status of their stocks before CoP15 and the reporting format was circulated to all Parties in March 2009. Decision 14.89 further invites TRAFFIC to review information on rhinoceros horn stocks in range States; to assess the trade routes by which horns enter and flow to illegal markets; to identify priority countries in which there has been a recent significant increase in poaching levels, where discrepancies exist in reported horn stockpiles, where volumes of horn stockpiles are unknown or where insufficient cross border collaboration to combat illegal rhinoceros horn trade has been reported. It should be noted that at the time of this writing, only five Parties (China, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom) have submitted rhinoceros horn stock declarations to the CITES Secretariat for transmission to TRAFFIC. It is worth noting that no rhinoceros range States in either Africa or Asia have yet complied with this decision.

IUCN and TRAFFIC have begun initial work gathering data and information from a variety of sources on the trade in South Africa, including permits issued for legal export of trophies and information on trade to Asia. A workshop has been conducted in Zimbabwe in preparation for the analysis to be conducted by IUCN and TRAFFIC as mandated under CITES Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP 14). It is critical that Parties at CoP15 are provided with an accurate and up-to-date picture of the status, conservation and trade in African and Asian rhinoceroses, so that firm international action can be taken to arrest this immediate threat to rhinoceros populations worldwide.

Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa: Outcome of Rhino Workshop

- A workshop organized by SANParks and EWT and attended by experts and interested parties, including PHASA, was held in June on the problem of Rhino Poaching in South and Southern Africa.
- Concern was expressed about the alleged role of professional hunters in recent Vietnamese rhino hunting activities. There was a need to set the record straight as far as PHA-

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PHASA: Outcome of Rhino Workshop

SA and its members are concerned. This was done with a detailed presentation of the PHASA track record over the past 18 months.

As a result of the above workshop the PHASA Committee has decided as follows:

- 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 this 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 of 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.

The Committee
Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa

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Editor's Notes

"canned lion shoots" - allowed more than 740 cage-bred lion to be shot by tourists (not hunters) while waiting to be fed during 2008. Several thousand more cage-bred lion are at the 123 breeders' facilities – some real MGM-Monster-Mane ones, no doubt too – and it looks like more are waiting in Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

These lion shooters are not hunters, and one who is in the know stated that *"I had one of them who thought he would be allowed to shoot the beast in his feeding cage between the bars. Some don't like to get out of the vehicle to shoot. They just want the skin, the head and the boast - I shot a lion in Africa"*.

Unfortunately, South Africa has too many new and well-intentioned laws that have proved too difficult to enforce. The lack of competent civil servants – throw in a bit of corruption as spice, an overstrained police force and those amongst the land owners and outfitters who abet corruption for their own economic gain, are standing in the way. South Africa's North-West Province accounts 637 lion out of the estimated total 740 killed in 2009. This concentration in one province is most likely not coincidental.

South Africa does not stand alone in this nefarious practice. It raises its ugly head in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia, and authorities there should act quickly and decisively to stamp it out before it takes root.

The problem of proper licensing, permitting and supervision of lion and rhino hunting in South Africa could be solved easily, as every clear thinking person may readily admit. Just

hand the process over to a semi-private institution in which four major stakeholders, i. e. the Professional Hunters' Association, Wildlife Ranching SA, WWF-SA (who have published a very sensible hunting policy paper years ago) and the national and provincial authorities are equal partners. Ideas along this line were proposed by the writer in the consultative process leading up to the now somewhat infamous TOPs. The scheme would be entirely self-funding – in fact there would be money left over to be ploughed back into conservation – and there will be enough watchdogs to eliminate corruption and abuse. As many things in life – an easy solution, but probably there are too many who stand to lose from doing things the right way.

Proper and sustainable "real hunting" is an essential part of the future of wildlife conservation in Africa. Especially of lion conservation, since the King of Beasts often lives outside formally protected areas. Hunting and hunting dollars can and will save the wild lion of Africa – most lion scientists of renown have stated this repeatedly. It is, therefore, quite unbelievable that Prof. Craig Packer seems now hell-bent on pushing the global community towards putting lion on CITES Appendix 1. It will kill the goose which laid the golden eggs. Where would funding come from for lion research and its conservation in those areas, which are not formally protected, if the USF&WS list the African lion on ESA? Will Professor Packer rather see his precious lion speared, poisoned or snared by self-defending locals, who risk life, limb and cattle living with lions and are disenfranchised from any economic benefits, if the protectionists have their way? Wild animals, especially those who occasionally eat people and often eat cattle, will not survive without benefit given to and value believed in by the people who live around them (*see also News from Africa – Mozambique on page 15 and Niassa Carnivore Project on Page 8*).

Of course the legal and moral obligations of the safari outfitters and hunting tourist who search for Africa's wild lion need to come into play here. Many of them have heeded the proposed restrictions on minimum age and avoidance of hunting prime males in pride situations. Others – usually fly-by-nights – have not. The latter ones are those in Professor Packer's sights, but the professor would achieve his objectives easier, if he would cooperate with the professional hunting associations in Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, with people like John Jackson III of Conservation Force, with the CIC (*see Long Term Conservation of the African Lion – page 14*), instead of pushing them into a corner.

Hunters raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in a few months this year for the lion range states to conduct their CITES recommended national lion studies and develop national lion management plans. Not one of these projects would have been possible without the hunter-dollar and John Jackson's ingenious capability to make international hunters accept their conservation responsibility. Human population growth is accelerating the pressures on Africa's wildlife including the lion. It is time that protectionists re-evaluate their standpoint and accept controlled trophy hunting as essential to wildlife conservation in general and the continued well-being of wild African lion populations in particular. If not for the sake of the hunters, then for the sake of wildlife and habitat conservation. We can live with that!

Sincerely
Gerhard R Damm

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