


ABSTRACTS

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Parallel Session 1 – Track A

From Wolves to Tigers and from Hippos to Oryx: International Wildlife Law and the Conservation of the Earth's Biggest Predators and Plant-eaters

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International cooperation, including through legal instruments, appears essential to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of the world's large carnivores and herbivores. Many of these species portray worrying conservation status and population trends; many of their populations extend across various countries; some of the threats they face are of an international nature; and many large carnivores and herbivores are keystone species, their fate thus affecting biodiversity conservation at large. This study focuses on the heaviest (> 15 kg) species in the order Carnivora, excluding pinnipeds; as well as the heaviest (> 100 kg) terrestrial large herbivore species, representing 11 families: Elephantidae, Rhinocerotidae, Hippopotamidae, Giraffidae, Bovidae, Camelidae, Tapiridae, Equidae, Cervidae, Suidae, and Hominidae. These 31 predators and 74 plant-eaters have been the focus of two recent, high-profile reviews focusing on their ecological roles, conservation status and threats (W.J. Ripple et al., 'Status and ecological effects of the world's largest carnivores', 343 Science (2014), 1241484; W.J. Ripple et al., 'Collapse of the world's largest herbivores', 1 Science Advances (2015), e1400103). The present study builds on these prior reviews by adding a legal dimension. For the same 105 species, it examines the degree to which existing international wildlife law contributes to their conservation, and identifies ways of optimizing this contribution. From this perspective, it reviews all global wildlife conservation treaties – Ramsar Wetlands Convention, World Heritage Convention, Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and Biodiversity Convention (CBD) – and an array of regional instruments, such as the 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and the 1979 Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. The outcomes of this review indicate that a substantial body of relevant international law already exists, whereas at the same time there is clear potential for enhancing the contribution of international law to large carnivore and large herbivore conservation. Avenues for pursuing such improvement include the promotion of instruments' effective implementation; clarification of their precise implications for carnivore and herbivore conservation; development of formal guidance to that effect; expansion of the scope of instruments in terms of species, sites and countries covered; and the development of new instruments.

States' Duties to Restore or Recover Vanishing Wildlife Populations: The Case of Large Carnivores

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Most international wildlife conventions explicitly acknowledge the objective of *restoration or recovery* of natural habitats and species at favourable conservation status, and set out further duties to achieve this. Much has been published on what is required to fulfill these duties in respect of currently existing wildlife with a particular focus on the prevention of negative impacts. Far less attention has been paid to the question what states' active obligations are once a wildlife population has disappeared, and in particular to what extent wildlife law requires the restoration or recovery of such vanished populations. For instance, while species reintroduction programmes are an important feature of global conservation efforts their legal status is ambiguous. In particular, it is unclear whether and under what conditions there exist an obligation for states to enhance populations, and what the legal implications of these potential policy measures are. Therefore, in this paper it is analyzed to what extent states' duties regarding the restoration or recovery of populations is context-dependent and influenced by a range of variables including:
(a) the applicable regime(s);
(b) whether the population was original or reintroduced;
(d) the causes of extinction (natural/anthropogenic); and
(e) the prospect of natural recolonization.
The analysis is conducted with particular reference to the large carnivore species as these are associated with an array of restoration scenarios and different international and European legal regimes. Standard law research methodology is used to address the main question, i.e., identifying relevant treaty provisions and interpreting them in light of the objectives, case law COP decisions or secondary law, and guidance documents, while using relevant legal and biological literature as subsidiary sources.

Wildlife Trade: Challenges Across the Borders
A Review on Current Status of One Horned Rhino's in Subcontinent of India

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The Indian rhinoceros once ranged throughout the entire stretch of the Indo-Gangetic Plain, but excessive hunting and agricultural development reduced their range drastically to 11 sites in northern India. In the early 1990s, between 1,870 and 1,895 rhinos were estimated to have been alive. In 2015, a total of 3,500 Indian rhinoceros are estimated to live in the wild. The species prefers alluvial plain grasslands, but is also found in adjacent swamps and forests. The current populations are restricted to habitats surrounded by human-dominated landscapes, so that the species often strays into adjacent cultivated areas, pastures, and secondary forests. Historically the major threats for the species are conversion of alluvial plain grasslands to agricultural lands and sports hunting. The present populations are threatened by poaching and decline in habitat quality. Serious declines in habitat quality have occurred in some areas primarily due to Invasion by alien plant species into grasslands. Successional changes resulting in conversion of grasslands to woodlands and Silting up of beels. The population of Indian one horned rhinoceros was severely threatened in the last century. The population in the Brahmaputra Valley, Assam, reached a low of 20 individuals in 1908, when hunting was banned in the area of today's Kaziranga National Park. This led to the species being categorized as endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened species. The species has recovered due to strict protection and expanded into neighbouring areas. This has led to a decrease in threat perception from Endangered to Vulnerable in the version 2009, one of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The species is listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act (1972) Government of India and in CITES Appendix I since 1975. After decades of successful efforts, the species increased to 3,500 in India by mid-2015.

Parallel Session 1 – Track B

CITES and the Whole Chain Approach to Combatting Illegal Wildlife Trade

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With the rise in illegal wildlife trade, there is increasing recognition that many of the solutions to unsustainable trade in endangered species will lie within national borders. To this end, non-governmental, governmental, and international organizations are putting time and money into the whole chain approach to combatting illegal wildlife trade. This whole chain includes the local communities who live with or near targeted wildlife, corruption, transportation routes, and, ultimately, demand in consumer markets. Indeed, some of the proposals being debated at the Seventeenth Conference of the Parties (CoP 17) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in South Africa in September and October 2016 address aspects of the whole chain approach such as domestic ivory markets, corruption, and demand reduction. Yet the Secretariat and some parties to the treaty have questioned whether all of these legitimately fall within the scope of the CITES treaty text because they focus on national-level activity and markets, rather than focusing primarily on international trade. The time is then ripe to ask whether CITES and international law can play any useful role in combatting illegal wildlife trade. Has CITES