



A Whale of a Stretch

Some warnings are just too silly to be taken seriously. An example is this recent claim in the e-newsletter of the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS). The warning goes like this:

“HELP STOP THE EU FROM SUBSIDISING WHALING. A new European Union tariff on a derivative from the Jojoba plant threatens to create an incentive for the use of whale oil in cosmetics...”

WDCS says that ‘Jojoba Esters’ is used widely in cosmetics and provides a virtually identical alternative to ‘spermaceti’, a derivative of whale oil. Next month, the European Union will vote on imposing a 7.7% tariff on Jojoba Esters which, if adopted, according to WDCS, will create an incentive for the cosmetics industry to use spermaceti in its products on which the tariff is zero.

This will, supposedly, increase pressure to overturn the whaling moratorium and the ban on trade in whale products. WDCS therefore reasons that the whaling industry will support the Jojoba tariff.

Meanwhile, the EU remains adamantly opposed to the resumption of commercial whaling. No amount of scientific data concerning the abundance of any species of whales has influenced EU representatives to CITES or to the International Whaling Commission to change its anti-use stance in any degree.

According to IWMC President, Eugene Lapointe, this newsletter plea to WDCS supporters is about as unnecessary as would be a similar memo to



constituents of New Zealand or Australia. “None of these IWC hold-outs is about to condone the sustainable use of whales, much less the use of spermaceti in a cosmetic preparation,” he said.

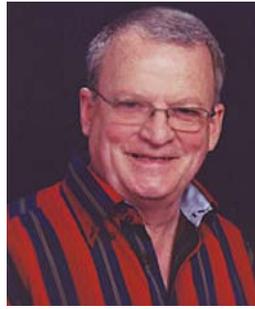
Perhaps the WDCS should save this memo for a later time – say, April 1st, so that it would receive the serious consideration that it deserves!■

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Just the Bear Facts, Please

Editorial by Eugene Lapointe



North American black bears are unique to the continent, very abundant, and a symbol of the north woods. In some areas, they seldom cross paths with people, and in others, they are known as a constant menace in the outdoors. Bears are hunted in both spring and fall in some parts of Canada. This legal sport hunting may be deplored by a minority in society, but that minority seldom lives in bear country, as is the case with spokespersons for PETA.

This organization recently managed to snag an interview with a writer for the London Evening Standard. The writer was apparently completely captivated by PETA's claim that the British military (of all things!) is contributing to the untimely and cruel deaths of baby bears, due to the facts that: (1) Canada allows spring bear hunts and (2) the British military routinely buys the pelts of bears taken in the spring, because these are the finest, being thick and prime, and they are used to make the traditional 18-inch high Busby hat for the queen's guards and certain other military personnel. PETA advises that the British must give up this practice of bearskin hats.

So why should this have anything to do with the alleged orphaning of some small bears?

PETA here either displays the abysmal ignorance of the spokespersons, or reveals their propensity to tell tall tales. In either case, the information that comes from the PETA mouth is incorrect, and therefore must not be taken seriously. The claim is that the spring hunting of bears, when conducted over baits, contributes to incidences of lactating sows being shot in significant numbers.

The spring bear hunt is considered to be an essential part of the conservation of this species, because in the absence of such a season, bears quickly become too numerous for compatibility with the humans in that environment. In the past year, at least one person has been killed by a black bear, and bears commonly collide with automobile traffic, rampage through domestic stock, ruin apiaries, raid corn fields, and gorge themselves in orchards. In some areas, they routinely kill pets and menace people in and around their homes. Bears also commonly break into houses.

The reality is that bears in most areas of Canada are hunted both in spring and fall. The PETA claim that the spring hunt results in orphaned cubs is silly, because in both spring and fall the mother bear is accompanied by cubs, and hunters simply do not pride themselves on taking such an animal and leaving the young to die. Lone bears are the ones that are routinely taken by hunters in both spring and fall. This practice therefore saves many baby bears from being eaten, because they are in danger from lone males at any time of the year. Males have no fatherly compassion for them, regarding them as prey, period.

The practice of hunting black bears is an efficient and cost effective way to achieve the conservation of this species. Hunting is tightly regulated. A significant side effect is economic; bear hunters contribute to local economies through their patronage of stores, motels, lodges, and gas stations, bringing in millions of dollars because there are both spring and fall

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bear seasons. When bears are controlled in this manner, some of the pressure is off residents in bear country, who can breathe a little easier about the safety of their families, because there are fewer incidents of “bear trouble” throughout the year.

IWMC congratulates the Canadian wildlife authority for the manner in which black bears are protected and conserved. Sport hunting is necessary for Canada, because it results not only in sustainable use, but in an increased harmony among all those who live in this environment, whether the occupants are bears, domestic animals, or people. ■

Keeping the Wolf from the Door

It seems that every now and then some would-be ecologist thinks that the world needs to be returned to an “idyllic” state – a habitat condition that existed before people were numerous, before there were farms and towns, when wild things ruled the landscape. Such an idealistic scheme, voiced recently in Wales, UK, would reintroduce to that area a number of creatures that were purposefully eradicated centuries ago.

The list includes wolves, lynx, bears, bison, “moose”, and beavers. Even more extraordinary, the list also includes walrus and gray whales, creatures long extirpated from the coasts of the UK. The plan would be to airlift them to the cold coast, with the assumption that they would simply settle in and thrive as if their absence had been merely a weekend or so.

Why? What could possibly motivate anyone to want to cause the return of such creatures to an area now domesticated, farmed, and sectioned into townships interlaced with roads and populated with hundreds of thousands of people? The motivation is beyond the imaginative reach of anyone who knows the present landscape of Scotland and Wales as the heavily peopled countryside that has developed in the last two or three hundred years.

The reintroduction scheme is the dream of one Peter Clarke, alleged founder of the Wild Beast Trust (which has been extensively referred to by various media writers, but which does not seem to have a website). Clarke’s immediate desire is to bring back wolves and lynx, turning them loose in the mountainous areas of Scotland and Wales, regardless of the fact that sheep herders and cow keepers would be within easy reach of free roaming, hungry predators. Clarke’s answer to his critics regarding wolves



is that they would be more interested in taking only the present population of hares, rather than sheep or calves. As for the possible dangers to people, he dismisses this as mere fantasy (from a Little Red Riding Hood scenario?)

Conservation and law enforcement officials are not a part of the Clarke vision. They are aware that certain of his followers have caged wolves and lynx and are perhaps

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“testing the waters” with releases to media about the alleged environmental and social benefits of taking the moors back to the pre-stone age. This will not fly, according to a piece in *The Scotsman*, September 12th: “Northumbria Police, which said it is investigating the claims, and Lothian and Borders Police, confirmed yesterday the move would break several laws and warned the group it would be committing a serious offence.”

The rural affairs department of the Scottish Executive warned that releasing animals such as lynxes and wolves into the countryside would be illegal. Many local organizations have spoken out, all in opposition to any such plan to release once native wildlife back into the countryside. Colin Galbraith, of Scottish Natural Heritage, said: “Anyone releasing animals, such as the lynx, into the wild in

Scotland without a licence would not only be breaking the law, but would also be demonstrating a lack of appreciation towards the animals' welfare.”

The record of reintroduction of wild predators to farm or ranch country has never been one of peaceful co-existence of the new animals with established farms and ranches. The scene has been replayed more than once in the American West. Wolves and bears and coyotes do not just take deer, hares and voles. They are opportunistic feeders and will prey on whatever crosses their line of sight, with lambs and calves being menu favorites.

IWMC President, Eugene Lapointe, said: “This idea is ludicrous and dangerous, as well as naive and inconsiderate of the welfare of all involved, animals and humans alike. ■

Activists sentenced for Terrorist Acts

On September 12, three convicted animal rights extremists were sentenced in a New Jersey court to prison sentences ranging from four to six years for the crime of using a website to incite threats and harassment against employees of a medical research company that uses animals.

In addition, they and their organization were ordered to pay one million dollars in restitution to Huntingdon Laboratories, whose employees had been personally terrorized by the defendants. A fourth defendant was sentenced to a lesser term of three years, and two more are expected to be sentenced at a later date.

All six convicted felons are members of the extremist group SHAC, which is the acronym for Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty. SHAC members have had long careers threatening Huntingdon employees in the United States and in the UK, where some have gone so far as to commit arsons.

The Center for Consumer Freedom reports that prosecutors told of a “campaign that included death threats, overturned cars, bombings and front-lawn midnight protests complete with chants of ‘Let’s burn his house to the ground’ . Real people with real families were terrified.”

It notes that other groups in the U.S. such as PETA, HSUS, the ALF, and the so-called Physicians’ Committee for Responsible Medicine, all oppose the use of animals in medical or pharmaceutical programs for human benefit. Following the court’s judgment, campaigners can no longer claim that the “liberation” of animals through criminal acts is merely expressions of their freedom of speech under the U.S. Constitution. ■



Never on Sunday? Think again

In much of Ontario, Canada, there has been a law against hunting on Sunday for the past 139 years. Now, the Ministry of Natural Resources is opening up gun hunting in about 100 towns and cities, including Ottawa, beginning this September.

Why would such a law be changed now? Are the people of Ottawa less godly than in years past? Not at all. This is a move of pure and simple self defense and keen political astuteness.

The stimulus is an unprecedented “explosion” of the deer population in and around Ottawa that results in 1,000 deer/car collisions per year. Locals are desperate because car insurance rates have skyrocketed in certain areas, and the medical, property damage and out of work costs have become too much to bear. Too many people have died, and something had to be done. In addition, the deer have made farming more difficult, trampling and eating crops in the fields and causing widespread economic damage.

Eastern and northern Ontario has had Sunday deer hunting for years, but the region around Ottawa kept the ban until it became obvious that the voters were restless. The Ottawa Citizen newspaper reports that the issue has become politicized, as all parties have advocated a change, some saying that while the expansion of hunting to Sunday would be politically advantageous, that safety and peace of mind are more immediate concerns.



This is a much changed world from the time when wildlife and people pretty much co-existed without undue stress. The non-human natural predators of deer, the wolves and coyotes, are either gone from the area or are not able to sufficiently cull the population.

Although bears are notorious for eating fawns in the spring, it is apparent that not enough population control has been achieved through that means.

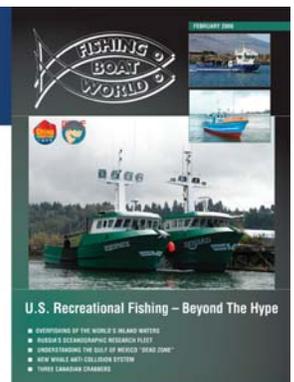
The role of sport hunting in the 21st century is the same as it ever was; the deer and bears are food for people, the hunt is enjoyable, and no environmental harm is done. As the newspaper article said, “Run Bambi Run” – but as long as Bambi continues to reproduce, people will continue to go hunting, every day of the week. ■

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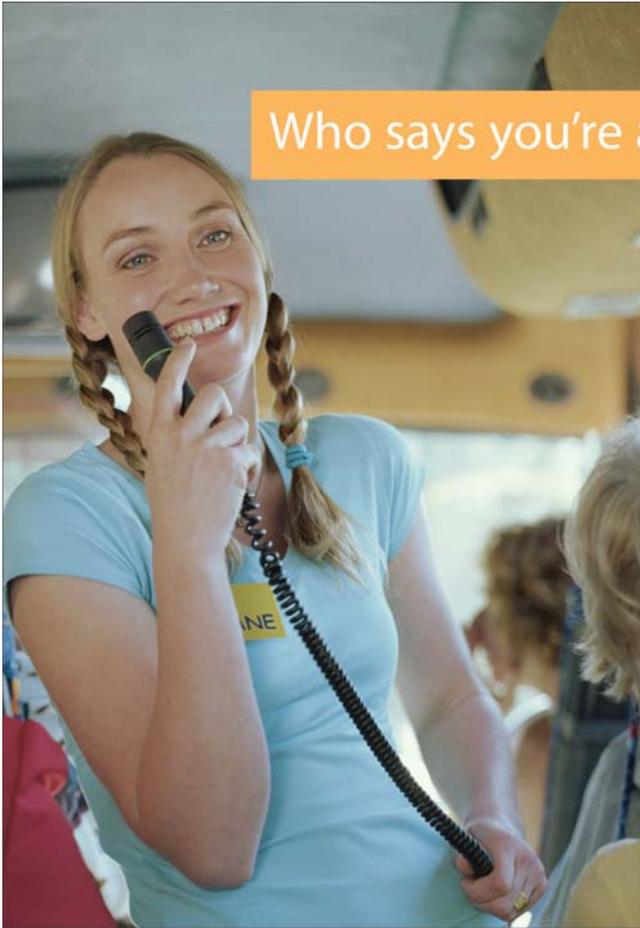


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