



## Safari Hunting Move Will Promote Conservation in Zambia

Humans have lived in Africa for about two million years, side by side with other major predators and all the really big fauna; rhinos, hippos, lions, giraffes, all kinds of hoofed game and primates and, yes, elephants. Today, because many more humans than ever live south of the Sahara, it is important that they and the game adjust their relationships with one another in order that the habitat they all share is used sustainably. Traditionally, adjustments of relationships happened when some species ate others, developed yearly migration patterns, or settled down in one place and fought each other off when territories were invaded.

A relatively new tradition has developed that can also contribute to solving this problem. The tradition is sport hunting of elephants by outsiders, who pay huge sums of money for the privilege of taking a large animal, usually one that is specifically designated by authorities. The local people benefit two ways; they gain free access to this source of meat, while much revenue from the sport or “safari” hunt stays in the local community, supporting infrastructure, medical facilities, stores, and schools. In addition, government sanctioned hunts also pay for wildlife law enforcement with the result that poaching of elephants for their ivory is more often adequately controlled. Paid, controlled safari hunts benefit the entire ecosystem.

The foreign hunter benefits by being able to take home the



hard evidence of his or her hunt – the tusks of the animal taken, along with photographs of the event. All of this works well for African people, their economy, their social environment, the wildlife and their habitat. These combined benefits, however, are all dependent on the willingness of the hunter’s nation to allow that person to bring home the trophy tusks.

US officials recently heard these arguments regarding the entire scenario of human and habitat conservation benefit from safari hunting of elephants. Bwalya Nondo, (Public Relations Officer, Zambia Ministry of Tourism, Environment & Natural Resources), wrote a brief article for The Daily Mail in Reno, Nevada, on January 27, 2007, in which he outlined one strategy of Zambia to overcome a shortage of safari hunters in his country: attract more hunters from the United States.

Zambian officials came to Nevada in January in order to lobby the US government to allow its citizens the right to bring home ivory from trophy hunts in Zambia. The meetings between US Fish & Wildlife Services Director Ken Stensil and Zambian minister Kabinga Pande were held during the annual Safari Club International 5 day convention in Reno. The US has upheld a CITES ban on trade in Zambian ivory, and this topic will undoubtedly be a major point of discussion at the upcoming CITES meeting in The Hague, Netherlands, in June. The Zambian official pointed

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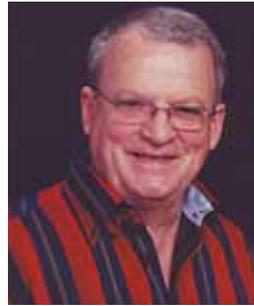
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## IUCN monitors industrial and political noises

### Around the Western Pacific Gray Whale

Editorial by Eugene Lapointe



The western Pacific stock of the gray whale is dwindling in numbers and is expected to become extinct in the near future unless its mortality rate is drastically reduced. The cause of the increased mortality of this creature may be related to the fact that these animals migrate annually to the area around Sakhalin Island, which is northwest of Japan, to feed and breed. This age old feeding ground is vital to their survival. Unfortunately, the same area is now a (literally) booming offshore oil and gas field. Fortunately, Sakhalin Energy Company executives have been aware of the problems that offshore development pose for gray whales, and made plans in March 2005 to reroute offshore pipelines to an area some twelve miles away from the whales' feeding ground.

In October 2006, the IUCN convened a new independent scientific advisory panel that shall monitor the critically endangered western gray whale population. The panel shall independently evaluate the factors present in Phase 2 of the Sakhalin II offshore activity, which is directed by the Russian Federation and the Sakhalin 3-part energy consortium, made up of Shell Oil, Mitsui, and Diamond Gas Sakhalin, a Mitsubishi company.

The IUCN Independent Scientific Panel, composed of "ten prominent international scientists", will monitor the critically endangered grays and "provide ongoing independent advice to a consortium of companies developing oil and gas reserves in the whales' summer feeding grounds in the Russian Far East." (See the IUCN website on its Sakhalin involvement.)

Some western gray whales have been noted farther south near Japan, and have been observed to be "skinny whales". These animals may or may not have been nutritionally affected by the recent human caused noise around their feeding grounds. For a number of years, and too often for their own good, some gray whales have been blundering into Japanese commercial fish nets, perhaps because they do not perceive them as obstacles. And too often, they die entangled. Four female grays have died in nets in the last four years.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, (or IUCN) has called upon Japan to "do something" to prevent these animals from becoming entangled in nets. Efforts are already being made by Japanese fishermen to release these creatures alive as often as possible. The IUCN recently (February 7, 2007) urged Japan to take action to save the estimated 120 animals that are left. Perhaps it would be possible to equip the nets with noise emitting devices that would keep the animals away from them, and still not repel the fish that are targeted. It is not known if such devices would be beneficial, but at this point, anything would be worth trying, because this is an environmental emergency.

IWMC World Conservation Trust applauds the efforts of the new scientific panel to monitor gray whales in the development area, and to decide upon any workable strategies to propose to the Russian Federation and to Sakhalin Energy executives. Perhaps if all parties in the area communicate on this problem, the western gray whale stock shall find food and comfort in its feeding grounds and shall begin to thrive once more ■

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out that Zambia and Zimbabwe share a border over which a healthy population of elephants holds sway. Zimbabwe's quota for sport hunting of elephants is 500 annually, while Zambia is allotted only 20. Zambia argues that this is unfair, and that its wildlife enforcement efforts are sufficient to control both poaching and expanded safari hunting.

Minister Pande wishes to extract the maximum economic value from his nation's resources. He noted that between 2001 and 2005, 115 elephants had to be killed through wildlife control programs. While the local people always receive the meat, they would benefit much more from the additional revenues that could be brought in by safari hunters. If the same number of elephants has to die regardless of US permissions and CITES obligations, Pande argued, then surely it would be in the best interests of both humanity and conservation to allow controlled safari hunting of the elephant resource.

Because the US is the potential source of more elephant hunters, it could play a significant role in elephant conservation in Africa through a change of policy in this matter. In addition, when local people are greatly benefited through such a program, they are very protective of that resource. This local interest is of great importance in gaining local support of wildlife law enforcement, which ultimately, solves poaching problems.

USF&W Director Ken Stansil has promised Zambia that the US will study all relevant information on this matter. This means that US policy decisions will be made pending arguments at CITES, where further international voices will add to this debate. ■

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## Tactics of Whaling Opponents at Issue Following Ship Fire

A fire on 15 February damaged the Nisshin Maru, the mother ship of the Japanese Antarctic whaling fleet, killing a young member of her crew. The body of 29-year old Kazutaka Makita was found in an area where smoke had been most intense.

Paul Watson of the militant group Sea Shepherd insists on his website that his crew had nothing to do with the fire, which began below decks where whales are flensed and processed. However, he admitted to using nail guns to fasten steel plates to the drain outlets, in order to prevent liquids draining from the flensing deck and to trying to foul the propeller with tow lines, buoys and netting in an attempt to disable the ship from moving normally.

Prior to the fire, two members of Watson's crew had become stranded in their small zodiac, lost in freezing fog after trying to disrupt the research. Japanese crews found them, went to their assistance, and radioed the Sea Shepherd vessels with their coordinates. Attacks on the Japanese ships Nisshin Maru and Kaiko Maru were resumed soon thereafter. Smoke bombs and glass containers full of acid were vaulted onto the deck of the Nisshin Maru, injuring two crewmen.

The fire on the Nisshin Maru was quickly controlled and extinguished but, for a few days, the ship could not make way on its own. The Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) insisted that, because of the assistance being provided by the fleet's other ships, there was no danger of it sinking or losing any of its oil in Antarctic waters.

Nevertheless, before the Nisshin Maru could successfully restart its engines, New Zealand Conservation Minister Chris Carter raised international concerns by proclaiming that the ship's loss of propulsion could lead to an ecological disaster in the region, citing the risks that could be caused to a penguin colony. He had issued no such warnings when Sea Shepherd was actively trying to cause a loss of propulsion by fouling the propellers of the Japanese ships.

In the event, the engines of the Nisshin Maru were restarted and ICR announced that the fleet would have to return to Japan because some of the research equipment could not be recovered. Dr. Hiroshi Hatanaka, Director General of the Institute of Cetacean Research, said that there never was any danger to a nearby penguin rookery, nor was there ever any danger of an environmental disaster.

The Nisshin Maru will be refurbished and made ready to resume the research later this year. ■

## Dogged by a Name



Americans are forbidden by law to import the skins of domestic dogs, or to use domestic dog fur in the manufacture of garments. While this propensity to protect the domestic dog,

*Canis familiaris*, is a cultural preference that has been codified, animal rights activists have now managed to utilize it to advance their wider agenda of opposing the use of all fur.

The vehicle for the latest series of attacks on the general fur industry has been a small Asian and eastern European animal that is commonly called the raccoon dog. It is a wild animal whose paws resemble those of dogs, and whose fur and markings resemble raccoons. It bears fur that is highly regarded as trim and sometimes is suitable for making jackets and other items.

*Nyctereutes* is the genus name for this animal. It is not, therefore, classified as either a dog, the genus name for which is *Canis*, nor is it classified as a raccoon, the genus of which is *Procyon*. Nor, for that matter, is it related to the red fox, *Vulpes*.

The raccoon dog has never been kept as a domestic animal. It is a wild hunter and scavenger, and unlike dogs, foxes, coyotes, wolves or raccoons, it hibernates. Even if it is ranched, this animal is still not by any stretch of the imagination anything like a domestic dog.

But the fact that its common name contains the word “dog” has been very convenient for activists who have used it to bend the truth about the source of fur in certain garments formerly sold by high-end retailers in the US.

Now it has been revealed that some items that have contained trim labeled as “faux fur” have actually contained the fur of the raccoon dog. Perhaps this mislabeling was done deliberately because the manufacturers and retailers were leery of putting the word “dog” on a garment, knowing that general ignorance of the true nature of the species would cause trouble. If so, they were right because it did cause trouble. However, they were probably not smart to mislabel their products because the media, predictably, has tended to focus only on this aspect of the story.

Some retailers, embarrassed by this attack on their reputations, have pulled the items off their racks and shelves. This means that the activists who have misrepresented the source of this fur have caused an unwarranted waste of a quality wild product.

And the fact remains that raccoon dogs are not dogs ■

## Noteworthy

### COP 13 and CMP 3 3 to 14 December 2007

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol will hold in Bali, Indonesia, its thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP13) and the third session of the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 3). Web: <http://www.unfccc.int>

### Demise of Hunting

The following excerpt is taken from a letter to the Washington Post on the Rumors about the Demise of Hunting (are greatly exaggerated) written by James M. Beers, Retired US Fish & Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologist/Refuge Manager/Law Enforcement Agent on 13 February 2007:

“Hunting is fine. ...Soon enough urban/suburban voters will once again realize the benefits (cost-wise and budget-wise) of hunting the geese that make them sick and the deer that kill and maim and infect them. Hunting is the most effective and least costly means of control and those facts cannot be kept politically incorrect and secret forever. When that time comes, new methods and acceptable traditions will once again be spoken of in schools by young hunters and at parties as folks mention someone they know who traps or someone that had them over for a game dinner. No trends are immutable, in spite of what “researchers” and “data” would have us believe.”

## Activists Chase the Polar Bear Rainbow

The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) is leading the chase for US public donations that will purportedly save the polar bear from global warming. Ironically located in the already warm climate of Tucson, Arizona, the CBD is sending out regular letters to potential supporters claiming that the polar bear is “on a path toward extinction because your federal government is not doing enough to combat global warming.” It is not too late “to support the CBD with a generous gift” that will “help strengthen one of the most effective grassroots environmental groups in America, as well as our actions to save the polar bears and save the Arctic habitat.” The group’s literature claims that it is only because the CBD has filed a lawsuit with other groups that the Bush administration is currently moving to list the polar bear as “threatened”.

Meanwhile, one of these other groups, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is asking Americans to “Please Answer the Polar Bear’s S.O.S!” The group says

it won round 1 when the Bush administration proposed to protect the polar bear under the Endangered Species Act. Its literature proudly boasts: “You did it! Your support made it possible for NRDC to trigger a media blitz that splashed photos of polar bears and their heart-breaking plight on TV screens and newspapers across the globe. Millions of people around the world were shocked to learn the latest facts.” NRDC asks for “generous support”, stating that “a tax-deductible donation to NRDC will help escalate our Polar Bear S.O.S. Campaign.”

Despite the media blitz, as Sustainable eNews reported last month, polar bears are more numerous now than at any time in the past fifty years and, according to experts, they and their supporting environments are adapting and responding well to the new conditions of warmer climate. The activists, it seems, are responding well to the fundraising potential. ■



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## IWMC Criticizes Australia, New Zealand on Whaling

IWMC World Conservation Trust participated in the normalization meeting in Tokyo (February 13-15) set up to try to figure out how the International Whaling Commission (IWC) might operate more effectively. At the meeting, IWMC President Eugene Lapointe singled out Australia and New Zealand for exacerbating tensions on whaling and for creating the conditions for the violent confrontation that occurred in the Antarctic between Japanese whaling ships and the Sea Shepherd organization.

IWMC stated that Australia and New Zealand have regularly deployed extreme rhetoric against Japan and its whaling program and have mischaracterized its actions, claiming that it exploits a “loophole” in the Whaling Convention. Article VIII of the Convention explicitly permits countries to undertake research programs and Japan has carefully maintained catches well below reproductive rates to conserve whale stocks. IWMC believes that by choosing to repeat allegations again and again, Australia and New Zealand have given diplomatic cover for illegal actions at sea by both Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd. Australia’s previous Environment Minister went so far as to telephone Sea Shepherd in December 2006 to wish them well in their efforts to stop Japan’s lawful harvest. Sea Shepherd then “found” Japan’s whaling ships in the Antarctic a few days after New Zealand’s Conservation Minister revealed that he knew the fleet’s coordinates. After the violence occurred, both countries hypocritically criticized Sea Shepherd.

Speaking at the conclusion of the conference in Tokyo, Eugene Lapointe, said: “When it comes to whaling, Australia and New Zealand have gone out of their way to cultivate the very culture of hate, distrust and conflict that

is used by Sea Shepherd to defend its illegal and dangerous actions.”

According to the Whaling Convention, the IWC is supposed, “to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry” and the normalization meeting in Tokyo was held to help the IWC operate according to its mission. However, neither Australia nor New Zealand attended. Instead, they are now secretly planning a separate meeting with the anti-whaling Pew Foundation in New York in April.

Mr. Lapointe said: “What is equally shameful is that Australia and New Zealand have been the main protagonists in polarizing the IWC to the point where it has become unworkable. Yet, as countries scrambled to save the international body, Australia and New Zealand were nowhere to be seen. They boycott the meeting themselves, they have taken the leading role in organizing a boycott by others and now they are surreptitiously organizing a completely separate meeting. This type of behavior is ripping the IWC apart.”

IWMC believes that both countries should take a more constructive approach to the whaling issue. Whale conservation is best served by the establishment of an international whale management system that establishes science-based quotas for whale harvests. One small step IWMC urges Australia and New Zealand to take is to formally disavow Sea Shepherd’s claims that its violence is backed by the 1982 UN Charter for Nature.

Mr. Lapointe said: “The UN Charter is supposed to encourage conservation, not justify piracy.” ■

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