



Holiday Greetings

To all our friends whose passion and lives are dedicated to the care of the plants, animals, and people of the planet, everyone at IWMC - World Conservation Trust wishes you good health, happiness, renewed strength and success with the coming holidays and throughout the New Year.

Eugene and the entire IWMC family

A l'occasion des fêtes prochaines et pour toute la nouvelle année, les membres d'IWMC - World Conservation Trust présentent à tous leurs amis qui vouent leur passion et leur vie aux plantes, aux animaux et aux peuples de la planète leurs vœux de bonne santé, de bonheur, d'énergie renouvelée et de succès.

Eugène et toute la famille IWMC

A todos nuestros amigos quienes entregan su pasión y vida al cuidado de las plantas, animales y seres de todo el planeta les deseamos desde la IWMC - World Conservation Trust, felicidad, salud, energía y éxitos para estas fiestas y la llegada del Nuevo Año.

Eugene y toda la familia de la IWMC

IWMC, World Conservation Trust augura a tutti i nostri amici, che dedicano la loro passione e la loro vita alle piante, agli animali e ai popoli del pianeta, buona salute, felicità, energie rinnovate e successo per le prossime Feste e per il Nuovo Anno

Eugene Lapointe e tutta la famiglia IWMC

Chikyu-jo no syokubutsu, doubutsu, ningen no tameni jounetsu to seikatsu wo sasagete iru subeteno yuujin no minasama, kokusai yasei seibutsu kanri renmei (IWMC) wa atarashii toshi wo mukaeru ni atari, kenkou de, koufuku de, soshite subetega seikouri ni susumu youni tsuyoku oinori itashimasu.

Eugene Lapointe (subeteno IWMC kankeisya wo daihyou shite)

Frohe Festtage und alles Gute zum Neuen Jahr!

God Jul och ett trevligt Nytt Ar!

Wolijk Kerwfeest en Gelukkig Nieuwjaar!

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In This Issue

The Hijacking of CITES,
Editorial by Eugene LapointePage 2

La CITES détournée,
Editorial d'Eugène LapointePage 2

Secuestro de la CITES,
Editorial por Eugene LapointePage 2

African Elephant Population Growths and
their Management Needs
by Ron ThomsonPage 8

Is wildlife conservation still possible?
by Yvan LafleurPage 11

Waste Not, Want Not, A Good Principle
to follow for People and
the PlanetPage 12



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The Hijacking of CITES

Editorial by Eugene Lapointe

The documents and proposals submitted for consideration at the next meeting of CITES (COP 15, March 2010) provide us with alarming and clear evidence of attempts by external forces to take control of the CITES decision-making process. Those external forces are non-governmental organizations with agendas to interrupt and eventually, prohibit the sustainable use of high profile, iconic wild resources.

Traditionally, the decision-making process of any international organization such as CITES, belongs to the governments of those countries that have agreed to become members of the international agreement. The explosion of the wealth and political clout of animal rights NGOs has allowed those same groups to take complete control of the IWC, in an unfortunate and damaging precedent that has entirely thwarted efforts to achieve science-based conservation.

The same process has been developing within the CITES Convention for years.

The proposal submitted by Monaco for the listing of the

La CITES détournée

Editorial d'Eugène Lapointe

Les documents et propositions soumis pour examen à la prochaine session de la CITES (CdP15, mars 2010) nous fournissent l'évidence claire et alarmante que des forces externes essaient de prendre le contrôle de son processus de prise de décisions. Ces forces externes sont des organisations non gouvernementales qui ont à leurs agendas l'interruption et, finalement, l'interdiction de l'utilisation durable des ressources sauvages ayant un profil élevé et valeur d'icônes.

Traditionnellement, le processus de prise de décisions de toute organisation internationale, comme la CITES, appartient aux gouvernements des pays qui ont accepté de devenir membres de l'accord. L'explosion de la richesse et de l'influence politique des ONG de défense des droits des animaux leur a permis de prendre le contrôle absolu de la CBI, précédent malheureux et dommageable, ce qui a totalement contrecarré les efforts pour parvenir à une conservation fondée sur la science.

Depuis des années, le même procédé s'est développé au sein de la CITES.

Secuestro de la CITES

Editorial por Eugene Lapointe

Los documentos y propuestas que se han sometido a discusión para la próxima reunión de la CITES (CdP 15, marzo de 2010) nos alarman y evidencian claramente los intentos de diferentes fuerzas externas de tomar el control del proceso de toma de decisiones de la CITES. Esas fuerzas externas están constituidas por organizaciones no gubernamentales cuyas agendas indican la interrupción, y eventual prohibición, del uso sustentable de especies silvestres emblemáticas o de alto perfil.

Tradicionalmente, el proceso de toma de decisiones de una organización internacional como la CITES pertenece a los gobiernos de los países que decidieron ser miembros y signatarios de ese tratado internacional. La riqueza e influencia política de las ONG defensoras de los derechos del animal han permitido a estos grupos ejercer el control total de la CBI, sentando un lamentable y perjudicial precedente que ha frustrado todo intento de bregar por una conservación basada en la ciencia.

Este mismo proceso se viene dando dentro del seno de la Convención CITES desde hace años.



Bluefin Tuna in Appendix I has been in the WWF agenda for months. The proposal submitted by Monaco to the CITES Secretariat is identical to the one circulated by WWF a year ago to several countries in seeking their sponsorship for it. It is interesting to note that Monaco, a French-speaking country, has forwarded its proposal to the CITES Secretariat in English with a cover letter in French....The strong campaign of support has also been established by other extreme NGOs such as Oceania and HSUS. It would be reasonable to expect that those Party nations which allow their fishermen to exploit this species, would monitor and control this activity in line with the quota recommendations of involved scientists. The genuine scientific concern for the Bluefin has always been expressed as part of a specific quota recommendation. If illegal activity is responsible for over-fishing, why can't responsible Party governments remedy this situation?

All proposals for the listing of shark species on CITES Appendices and for the listing of the Polar Bear have been pushed on the US Agenda by powerful US NGOs such as WWF and HSUS. Those governments whose citizens utilize

La proposition d'inscription du thon rouge de l'Atlantique à l'Annexe I, soumise par Monaco, est à l'ordre du jour du WWF depuis des mois. Le texte soumis au Secrétariat CITES par Monaco est identique à celui distribué il y a un an, à plusieurs pays, par un WWF à la recherche d'un parrainage. Il est intéressant de noter que Monaco, pays francophone, a envoyé sa proposition en anglais, sous couvert d'une lettre en français... Une puissante campagne de soutien a aussi été mise en place par d'autres ONG extrémistes, telles qu'Oceania et la HSUS. On pourrait raisonnablement s'attendre à ce que les pays qui permettent à leurs pêcheurs d'exploiter cette espèce surveillent et contrôlent cette activité, en suivant les recommandations de quotas des scientifiques compétents. Les préoccupations scientifiques légitimes au sujet de ce thon rouge ont toujours été exprimées dans le cadre de recommandations de quotas spécifiques. Si des activités illicites sont responsables de la surpêche, pourquoi les gouvernements des Parties responsables ne pourraient-ils pas remédier à cette situation?

Toutes les propositions d'inscription de requins aux annexes CITES et celle de transfert de

La propuesta presentada por Mónaco para la inclusión del Atún rojo en el Apéndice I es parte de la agenda de la WWF desde hace varios meses. Esa propuesta, enviada a la Secretaría CITES por Mónaco, es idéntica a la que el WWF circulara hace un año entre los países Parte en busca de auspicio. Resulta interesante notar que Mónaco, un país francófono, ha sometido su propuesta a la Secretaría CITES en inglés, precedida por una carta de presentación en francés... La poderosa campaña para la inclusión del Atún rojo en la CITES fue acompañada por las ONG Oceania y HSUS. Sería razonable que aquellos países Parte que permiten la explotación de las especies pesqueras vigilen y controlen esta actividad dentro de los cupos recomendados por el sector científico involucrado. La verdadera preocupación científica sobre el Atún rojo siempre ha sido contemplada en el marco de un recomendado cupo específico. Si la causa de la sobrepesca proviene de actividades ilegales ¿Por qué esos mismos países Parte no serían capaces de remediar la situación?

Todas las propuestas de inclusión de tiburones y del oso polar en los Apéndices de la



certain shark species are well aware of the population status of each of them. It is their sovereign responsibility to speak up at CITES, to make clear their conservation and management plans, and to defend their science-based decisions to enforce specific quotas, and the ways in which they do so. This makes much more sense, from a conservation and social justice perspective, than allowing total bans on use to be fronted without reasonable cause.

The US and Canada each have conservation plans for their polar bears, and should similarly, present these as adequate measures as they allow a certain level of harvest of this species from specific populations. No NGO should be allowed to dominate and pervert this conservation tradition.

As far as the Elephant is concerned, the notorious IFAW is one of several animal rights NGOs that have succeeded in pressuring Kenya to submit a proposal for a 20-year moratorium, not only on international trade in ivory but also for a moratorium on the presentation of any proposals for the downlisting of the Elephant. These proposals have been forwarded, regardless of its demonstrable population status and of

l'ours blanc à l'Annexe I ont été poussées sur l'agenda des Etats-Unis par des ONG puissantes de ce pays, telles que le WWF et la HSUS. Les gouvernements dont des citoyens utilisent certaines de ces espèces connaissent bien l'état des populations de chacune d'elles. Il est de leur responsabilité souveraine de s'exprimer à la CITES, pour dire clairement ce que sont leurs plans de conservation et de gestion, pour défendre leurs décisions, fondées sur la science, de mettre en vigueur des quotas précis et pour dire comment ils le font. Du point de vue de la conservation et de la justice sociale, ce serait plus sensé que d'imposer des interdictions totales et infondées d'utilisation.

Les Etats-Unis et le Canada ont chacun des plans de conservation de leurs ours blancs et ils devraient les présenter comme des mesures adéquates, qui permettent un certain niveau d'exploitation de l'espèce par des populations déterminées. Aucune ONG ne devrait être autorisée à dominer ou pervertir cette tradition en matière de conservation.

En ce qui concerne l'éléphant, l'IFAW notoirement connue est l'une des ONG de défense des droits des animaux, parmi

CITES que aparecen en la agenda de los Estados Unidos de América han sido promovidas por poderosas ONG de ese país, tales como el WWF y la HSUS. Aquellos gobiernos cuyos ciudadanos utilizan determinadas especies de tiburones son concientes del estado poblacional de cada una de ellas. Es su responsabilidad soberana la de presentar a la CITES sus planes de conservación y manejo, de defender la aplicación de cupos de extracción sustentados científicamente, y de determinar la mejor manera de llevarlos a cabo. Esto es más razonable, desde el punto de vista de la conservación y la justicia social, que la aplicación de medidas totalitarias e infundadas que impidan la utilización.

Los Estados Unidos de América y Canadá poseen planes de conservación para sus osos polares, y deberían presentar estos planes como el marco adecuado para la gestión y uso de esta especie de acuerdo a cada población. No se debe permitir que ONG alguna domine y pervierta esta tradición de conservación.

En lo relativo al elefante, la notable IFAW es una de las ONG defensoras de los derechos del animal que ha tenido



African peoples' need to manage this species so that they may live safely in the same environment with this creature.

International trade in wild species is the business of the range states and their trading partners. It is in their best interests to assure that this trade is managed through pursuit of genuine conservation goals rather than as a boost to the political agendas of special interest groups.

Extremist NGOs are powerful today because their colorfully illustrated website messages reach thousands of citizens in each CITES Party nation with not only incorrect, but often, egregiously false claims about the population status of certain species, and unfounded arguments for complete bans on harvest and trade of their products. NGO websites routinely give citizens the opportunity to "click the link" to their own governments and to send an already prepared, uneditable demand that bans on trade in certain species shall be national policy goals at CITES.

Because it is technically possible, it is also likely that in some instances these "citizen emails" were manufactured through technological wizardry, making

plusieurs, qui est parvenue à pousser le Kenya à soumettre une proposition en faveur d'un moratoire de 20 ans, non seulement sur le commerce international de l'ivoire mais aussi sur la présentation de toute proposition de déclassement de l'espèce. Cette proposition a été envoyée sans se préoccuper de l'état des populations d'éléphants et de la nécessité pour des pays africains de les gérer, afin que leurs populations humaines puissent vivre en sécurité dans le même environnement qu'elles.

Le commerce international des espèces sauvages est l'affaire des Etats des aires de répartition et de leurs partenaires commerciaux. Il va de leur intérêt de s'assurer que ce commerce soit géré en poursuivant des buts de conservation sensés plutôt qu'en propulsant l'agenda politique de groupes d'intérêt particuliers.

A l'heure actuelle, les ONG extrémistes sont puissantes, parce que les messages hauts en couleurs de leurs sites internet atteignent des milliers de citoyens de chaque pays Partie à la CITES et les bombardent d'informations non seulement incorrectes mais souvent carrément fausses sur l'état des populations de certaines espèces et d'arguments infondés en faveur

éxito presionando a Kenia a que presente una propuesta para una moratoria de 20 años, no solo para el comercio internacional de marfil, sino para cualquier otra propuesta de pasaje del Apéndice I al II de esa especie. Estas propuestas han sido presentadas sin tener en cuenta el estado de las poblaciones afectadas ni las necesidades del pueblo africano que permitan convivir con el elefante en el mismo hábitat.

El comercio internacional de especies silvestres es un asunto que concierne directamente a los países del área de distribución de las especies y de los países importadores. Es de su particular interés que ese comercio se lleve a cabo teniendo en cuentas las metas de la conservación y no el de satisfacer las agendas políticas de grupos con intereses propios.

Las ONG extremistas son poderosas porque los mensajes promovidos desde sus coloridas páginas de internet alcanzan a miles de ciudadanos de los países Parte en la CITES con información no solo incorrecta, sino a menudo falsa sobre los estados de ciertas poblaciones de especies, y maliciosos argumentos para promover la prohibición total de extracción y comercio de sus



it appear that thousands more than the actual citizen response, have joined this effort. The technology is termed "Internet provider masking" and is an utterly fraudulent tactic that has worked to intimidate governments into "going green" in political self-defense. It is very time-consuming and costly to "get back" to even a statistically significant proportion of alleged citizen respondents, and so, examination of the reliability of these floods of alleged citizen demands is not routinely performed. Risk-averse national leaders have in many cases, decided not to take political chances with their domestic leadership security.

Parties to CITES need to wake up to the realities of this Cyber Age, and to actively dispute all incorrect and culturally biased NGO claims. This needs to be done on government websites and in official press releases. This must be done in order to preserve Party control over the conservation status of all their natural resources, for the benefit of their environments and the cultural and economic welfare of their citizens.

IWMC urges all CITES Parties with a strong sustainable use philosophy to cooperate and communicate ahead of time in

d'interdictions totales de récolter et de commercialiser leurs produits. Les sites des ONG donnent régulièrement aux citoyens la possibilité de 'cliquer le lien' vers leurs propres gouvernements et d'envoyer des demandes préparées et non modifiables pour que l'interdiction du commerce de certaines espèces soit un but politique à la CITES.

Parce que c'est techniquement possible, il est probable que dans certains cas ces 'courriels de citoyens' ont été élaborés par la magie technique, faisant qu'il apparaît que des milliers de réponses supplémentaires se sont ajoutées aux réponses réelles. La technologie se nomme 'fournisseur masquant d'internet' et est une tactique totalement frauduleuse, qui a été utilisée pour intimider des gouvernements et les pousser à 'devenir verts' par auto-défense politique. Il faut beaucoup de temps et il est coûteux de 'revenir en arrière' pour établir une proportion statistiquement significative des citoyens ayant prétendument répondu et, partant, ce n'est pas de façon routinière qu'il est procédé à l'examen de la validité de ces flots de demandes citoyennes. Souvent, les leaders nationaux ne se hasardent pas à prendre le risque de mettre en péril l'assurance dont ils bénéficient.

productos. Las páginas web de estas ONG dan la posibilidad a los usuarios de hacer un "click a un link" a las páginas web del gobierno de su país con el fin de enviarle una carta preescrita inmodificable pidiendo que la prohibición del comercio de una determinada especie sea un objetivo político de la CITES.

Debido a que es técnicamente posible, en algunos casos estos "correos electrónicos de los ciudadanos" son fabricados, haciendo creer que son miles los ciudadanos que se han sumado a ese pedido. El término técnico apropiado sería "máscara del proveedor de internet" y se trata de nada menos que una táctica fraudulenta que se ha utilizado para intimidar a los gobiernos para que se "conviertan en verdes" como una medida de autodefensa. Es muy difícil y costoso "remontar hacia atrás" esos correos, aun estadísticamente, para saber a ciencia qué porcentaje del público realmente envió esa carta y constatar la veracidad del proceso. Los políticos en muchos casos deciden no arriesgarse a poner en peligro el apoyo del cual se benefician.

Las Partes en la CITES deben tomar conciencia acerca de la realidad de esta era cibernética,



order to find a mutually acceptable plan with which to avoid a total take-over of the CITES Agenda and activities by extreme NGOs. CITES Parties need to work together to assure that range state rights to manage and benefit from the sustainable use of their national resources, are not compromised by those organizations that consistently work to violate the very principles of natural resource conservation.

Les Parties à la CITES doivent se réveiller aux réalités de l'âge cybernétique et réfuter toutes les informations incorrectes et culturellement biaisées qui émanent des ONG. Cela doit être fait sur les sites internet des gouvernements et par des communiqués de presse officiels. Cela doit être fait pour que les Parties puissent préserver leur contrôle sur l'état de conservation de leurs ressources naturelles, au profit de leurs environnements et du bien-être culturel et social de leurs citoyens.

IWMC prie instamment toutes les Parties à la CITES ayant une philosophie forte d'utilisation durable de coopérer et de communiquer rapidement, afin de trouver un plan mutuellement acceptable qui permette d'éviter une mainmise totale par les ONG extrémistes sur l'ordre du jour et les activités de la CITES. Les Parties à la CITES doivent travailler ensemble pour garantir que le droit des Etats des aires de répartition de gérer l'utilisation durable de leurs ressources nationales et d'en bénéficier ne soit pas compromis par les organisations qui œuvrent constamment au viol des principes mêmes de la conservation des ressources naturelles.

y refutar la manipulación informática y cultural de estas ONG. Esto debe hacerse en los sitios web gubernamentales y a través de comunicados de prensa oficiales. Las Partes deben mantener el control sobre el estado de conservación de todos sus recursos naturales, por el bien de su medio ambiente y el bienestar cultural y económico de sus ciudadanos.

IWMC insta a aquellas Partes en la CITES que sostienen una sólida filosofía del uso sustentable a que cooperen y se comuniquen rápidamente de manera de encontrar un plan común para combatir el asalto a la Agenda de la CITES que promueven las ONG extremistas. Las Partes en la CITES deben trabajar juntas para asegurar que el derecho de los países del área de distribución a obtener los beneficios de la utilización sustentable de sus recursos naturales no se vea comprometido por aquellas organizaciones que violan continuamente los principios de la conservación de los recursos naturales.



African Elephant Population Growths and their Management Needs.

by Ron Thomson

I am writing this note at the request of the IWMC World Conservation Trust and in response to IFAW's ridiculous claim that elephants in Africa will be extinct within 15 years.

My credentials for writing this dissertation are that I have officially been in the wildlife management field for 50 years having started my career as a game ranger, aged 20, on 11th November 1959. During this time I have commanded some of Africa's biggest national parks and I have been involved with elephant management of one kind or another throughout this period. I am probably one of the few ex-game wardens alive who have worked inside national parks at a time (+/- 1960) when the then low elephant population numbers were probably JUST within the sustainable carrying capacity of their habitats.

The biggest danger to elephants in the southern half of Africa today, inside the bigger and most prestigious national parks, comes from the elephants themselves - which currently, without population control management, are doubling their numbers "about" every ten years. As a consequence the habitats in most of these national parks have been consistently and progressively impoverished. This has been a process that, in some cases, has been in progress over a period of half a century.

The elephants of northern Botswana, for example, have eaten out all palatable plant species for a distance of 25 kilometres east of the Chobe River

during the last 50 years. During the six-months long dry season they now have to travel 25 kilometres every day, deep into teak forest country, to find enough food to stay alive. And as the teak forests grow on fossil Kalahari sand dunes the food that grows in the teak forests is inherently of very poor quality. Every day they also have to visit the river where they slake their thirst. The conundrum is this: the amount of energy the elephants get from the food they eat - at the height of the annual dry season (August, September and October) - is less than the energy they need to walk the huge distance between the water and their food supply. This causes the elephants to exhaust whatever fat they may have built up during the rainy season and to absorb much of their protein reserves, too. By the end of the dry season, therefore, all the elephants look like wandering skeletons.

The big bulls fair much better than the cows because they are bigger, because they have much longer legs (and so can walk further and faster than the cows) and they are independent of parental responsibilities. They can also manage to visit the water only every second day.

It is the cows and calves that suffer the most. One of the first manifestations of nutritional stress in an elephant population is that lactating cows stop producing milk. Calves that are dependent on this food source thereafter cannot keep up with the parental herd. They wander off to die a lonely and horrible death of heat fatigue and dehydration (if they are far from water), or they gravitate to the water where



they while away whatever days are left to them and they die an equally horrible death by starvation. Many of these calves are killed by lions and hyenas - not an easy death by anyone's standards.

In many cases even quite large young elephants, plagued by nutritional malais, leave the cow herds and wander about on their own. Even these bigger animals are sometimes killed by lions - because they put up no resistance when they are attacked.

The stage at which elephant populations are subjected to this kind of natural mortality occurs when the numbers have been multiplying exponentially for many decades, when the food supplies near the water become progressively more exhausted during the dry season, and when the available levels of nutrition in their food supply becomes less than the energy they need to commute daily between their food supply and water. Tragically, the elephants decimate the habitats in this process, drastically changing the physiognomic character of the game reserve. Certain types of habitats disappear completely and those animal species that are dependent on those habitats become locally extinct. So such elephant over-abundance destroys the game reserve's biological diversity completely. In the end the game reserve becomes a virtual desert. An independent organization in Botswana called "Vision 2016", which evaluates the country's development and its visions for the future based upon what is actually happening within the various spheres of national development, recently alerted the citizens of Botswana with regards to what is happening to the country's wildlife. In the absence of any kind of elephant population control management over the last 50 years Botswana's elephants now number, it is said, somewhere between 150 000 and 200 000. Different people have different opinions regarding what the actual number really is. After assessing the growth of the population during

the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium, my own opinion is that they must currently number in excess of 200 000. And because of habitat damage and serious competition for food, Vision 2016 claims that since the year 2000, 11 major species of wild animals have declined by as much as 90 percent.

Scientists first began to report irreparable damage by elephants to the Chobe riverine forest habitats in 1960. The population then numbered an estimated 7 500. This is the only indicator we have that points to the real elephant carrying capacity of the Chobe (and surrounding area) National Park. It would suggest that Botswana's elephants should never been allowed to exceed about 5000 animals.

Kruger National Park now carries 16 000 elephants. In my opinion the game reserve's habitats (when they were healthy - c. 1960) might have been able to sustainably carry 4000 elephants. A study of top canopy trees in the middle of the park tells us that only 6 percent remain of the number of these vitally important trees that were extant in 1960. Elephant culling has now been ruled out as a population management mechanism in Kruger so we can look forward to Kruger going the same way as Botswana.

In Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe the elephant population now probably numbers in excess of 60 000 elephants. In 1960 there were 3500 elephants in the park (although some scientists believe the number may then have been as high as 6000). At that time the elephants were busy eliminating the last of the *Pterocarpus angolensis* trees; and the big mlala palm trees. When such extirpations start to happen is the time when elephant populations should reduced! So I do not believe that Hwange's elephant population should ever have been allowed to exceed about 2500.



In my opinion we have been trying to carry far too many elephants in our national parks in Africa for far too long. Africa cannot sustain the huge numbers of elephants - such as those I have herein discussed - for very much longer. And if major elephant population reduction exercises are not conducted in many of our game reserves soon, over time, all these elephant populations will crash.

Unfortunately, before that happens, the species diversity of the parks will suffer greatly. Major species of trees and animals will be rendered locally extinct. And they will never return. To those scientists who claim that nature will recycle its resources after every elephant population crash I would say "balderdash". This will not happen and those who think this way are flying pies in the sky.

One of the trees that will disappear is the giant baobab - which grows to an age of 5000 years. That means the big baobabs extant in our African game reserves today were already 1 700 years old when Tutankhamen was pharaoh in ancient Egypt. Does the "cycle" these scientists envisage include this kind of time frame? I don't think so.

When we read some of the diatribe that emanates from animal rights organizations (like IFAW) over the issue of elephant management we should understand that they are quoting only numbers. And the numbers are in no way related to the impact those numbers are having on the habitats that support those elephants. This a major flaw in their argument that renders everything that they say invalid.

But then we must also understand the motive behind such false utterances. The animal rightists' purpose is to create an emotional panic amongst the unversed urban publics of the First World - who know NOTHING about the realities of wildlife management ANYWHERE. And their objective is to raise funds for their organizations. Their propaganda has nothing to do with "helping" animals. There are many people all over the world beginning to recognize this reality and the animal rights movement, in general, is more and more being referred to as "the biggest confidence industry the world has ever known".

All this does not mean animal rights propaganda should be ignored. It DOES create emotional panic in urban societies - everywhere - even in Africa. And in Africa this emotional panic amongst the electorate has caused the responsible government ministers to discount culling as a management tool to control excessive elephant numbers. So we MUST counter act whatever the animal rightists say no matter how ridiculous it may be in reality. If we don't they will win by default and all our currently beautiful national parks will become deserts.

In a nutshell there is no truth whatsoever in the IFAW statement - that Africa's elephants will become extinct within 15 years - to which this dissertation is directed. In reality we have far too many elephants in Africa relative to the habitats that have to carry them.

Note: Ron Thomson writes wildlife management books in his retirement. Anyone who reads this article and wants to know more about the philosophies he expounds should ask him about his books on the subject. His email address is: magron@ripplesoft.co.za.



Is wildlife conservation still possible?

By Yvan Lafleur Wildlife Biologist and Enforcement Advisor

Wildlife conservation is a relatively recent concept in human thinking. In the Middle Ages some wildlife species were protected for their value and hunted as food, while others were destroyed because they were presenting a threat or problems for some human activities. In the last century we have seen a strong trend to conserve wildlife as an essential part of the ecosystem. This approach has been based on user knowledge and scientific analysis. During the more recent “golden age” of organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, the aim has been to ensure that wildlife will continue to exist through a well-managed approach. Conservation is now perceived as a balance between uses by humans, needs of the species, and compatible interactions with people living in the neighbourhoods of these species.

Many national and international organizations have been created and together, succeeded for years in maintaining and, in some cases, improving the status of many species. However, a process has increasingly developed which is aimed at protecting some species without considering the factors relating to their use by and interaction with, humans. Scientific data and human cultural needs have been used increasingly less often in the rationale to protect a species. In some cases, protection of wildlife has become more an ideology than a rational decision.

We note that many groups such as hunters, fishermen, and other harvesters of fauna and flora, have had increasingly diminished involvement in joint conservation initiatives with other groups

which have a wildlife focus. Concurrently, drastic changes at the planet level are presenting a new challenge for wildlife conservation. Trade globalization, economic explosion of very populous countries (having numerous endangered wildlife species), and climate changes, have removed wildlife from the public interest. The new question for the general public now is “how will I survive these changes and what can humans do to adapt?” Wildlife is no longer a high priority on the world agenda and the few groups still interested appear to be strongly divided.

Is wildlife conservation still possible? Yes, but only if major decisions by interested parties are jointly taken and implemented. The initial step requires more discussions and agreements between organisations having different views on wildlife conservation and protection. These discussions must include scientists, wildlife managers, communities, potential users and other wildlife-focused organisations. Success for conservation can occur only if all participants cooperate in decisions and subsequent plans according to their roles and responsibilities. If the parties continue their traditional fight, the only loser shall be wildlife.

People interested in wildlife have to go back to some basic principles that shall ensure effective wildlife conservation. These principles are:



- Humans and wildlife are sharing the same planet and appropriate management based on scientific data is essential for the survival of all species, including Homo sapiens.
- Use of wildlife by humans is neither right nor wrong.
- Economic value is an essential element of the decision making process.
- Communities living in proximity of wildlife have significant interests and a major role to play.
- Prohibition and enforcement are only tools to support wildlife conservation.
- Science does not have all the answers.
- Decisions and management plans need to be reviewed and modified to adapt to changes in both society and the environment.

IWMC will participate with other NGOs, government agencies and wildlife users to formulate an integrated approach to address an issue specific to an ecosystem or a species, and to coordinate human activities to ensure a better conservation of that ecosystem or species. This proposal for action necessitates an atmosphere in which participants with open minds agree to accept the results of the cooperative analysis, even if these results do not reflect initial views on the issue. The only objective must be to ensure the long-term conservation of the chosen species or ecosystem.

Waste Not, Want Not A Good Principle to follow for People and the Planet

In Iceland there is a very creative and practical gentleman named Eggert Johannsson. Mr. Johannsson is an accomplished furrier who works with a unique form of Icelandic wool as a raw material for his high fashion, warm and practical garments. Iceland is a well-known source of quality sheepskin products, as sheep are uniquely suited to the ruggedly beautiful green hills of that nation. As with all animals, a certain proportion of young of the year do not live very long past birth, and historically, these animals' remains were discarded. Mr. Johannsson and his colleagues have decided to eliminate the waste of these creatures by utilizing these exceptionally

soft, finely coated lambskins in newly designed, high fashion garments. He refers to these products as the "Born Again" line.

The garments are cooperatively styled by Johannsson and his design partner, Ms. Helga Bjornsson, of France. There is now an entire "Born Again" collection of stylish coats and jackets, with the promise of a new, separate line of matching accessory items to be added very soon.

Sheep farmers and conservationists applaud this innovative use of these exceptionally soft, fine lambskins. The project results in a more cost effi-



cient operation for the producers, for whom every dollar or Euro counts in this depleted global economy. Icelandreview.com, an online publication, notes that large sheep farms which routinely produce between 1300 to 1400 lambs each season, find that around 50 are either stillborn or die shortly after birth. While the total numbers are small, it is still worthwhile to these farmers to utilize these products in cutting their production costs.

It is said that skins from such young lambs are softer and warmer than those of older animals. The Icelandic Minister of Agriculture praised Mr. Johannsson and his colleagues for their initiative in promoting use of this product. IWMC, as well,

joins him in wishing to highlight this initiative, for the creative effort and success of promoting use of natural products instead of synthetic, pollution-producing items. The world needs more such innovative use of otherwise discarded natural products in this time of heightened awareness of the human impact on our planet. Well done!