

Sustainable eNews

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Promoting Sustainable Use

December 2003

IWMC World Conservation Trust



God Jul...

Gledileg Jol...

Joyeux Noël...

Glaedelig Jul...

Hyvaa Joulua...

Linksmu Kaledu...

Merry Keshmish...

Merry Christmas...

Shinnen omedeto...

Sung Tan Chuk Ha...

Kala Christouyenna...

Buone Feste Natalizie...

Een Plesierige Kerfees...

Froehliche Weihnachten...

Mitho Makosi Kesikansi...

Kellemes Karacsonyi unnepeket...

Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia...

Felices Pasquas Y felices ano Nuevo...

Kung His Hsin Nien bing Chu Shen Tan...

Vrolijk Kerstfeest en een Gelukkig Nieuwjaar...

Prejeme Vam Vesele Vanoce a stastny Novy Rok...

Pozdrevlyayu s prazdnikom Rozhdestva is Novim Godom...

Feliz Navidad...

Vesele Vianoce...

Tchestita Koleda...

Editorial: Auntie Beeb and Aunt Sallys

By Eugène Lapointe

The BBC has been criticized in the UK both for its political bias and for exaggerating stories, while internationally it has come under fire for its anti-Americanism and its one-sided reporting of the Middle East. To that we might add its coverage of conservation issues, which always seems to be underpinned by an unshakeable belief in protectionism over sustainable use.

The most recent example is a report (4 December 2003) about elephant populations in Africa that took some good news and turned it into bad news. The BBC doggedly seems to believe that elephant populations are under constant threat from outside forces – hunters, poachers and ivory sales. So the news from the IUCN that African elephant populations could be more than fifty per cent higher than previously estimated was branded not as a good thing or evidence that international conservation is working to sustain populations, but as a “puzzle”.

In the media, “puzzle” is code for “doesn’t fit our beliefs”. It is not a puzzle to those of us who support sustainable use that African elephant populations are, in fact, relatively healthy.

The African elephant population numbers are a “puzzle” to the BBC because it, like many media organizations, has willingly swallowed the line of the animal rights activists hook, line and sinker. So the BBC cannot, under any circumstances, characterize the IUCN report as “good news”. If it did, it would be inconsistent with its editorial line. So it has to find a way to deny the good news.

The news is also characterized as a “puzzle” because the BBC, like many media organizations, adores bad news. Good news isn’t news. Bad news is big news. A puzzle is something we can worry about. Worrying about a puzzle is almost as good as worrying about bad news.

The BBC therefore set about undermining any idea that the population figures might be reliable, tying up the elephant story in extremely cautious language. The IUCN report “suggests they may be more numerous”. Couldn’t we have squeezed in any more caveats here? You can be sure that, had the IUCN concluded that populations of African elephants were lower than previously estimated, this news would have been reported with absolute certainty. It would have been as solid as the Ten Commandments.

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Once established, the so-called “puzzle” has to be solved. The best way to do that is by speculation. So the speculation becomes the main body of the report. Of course, speculation isn’t news, it’s opinion.

Fortunately for the BBC, the IUCN also has a fundamental interest in being puzzled by its own findings. If there is no problem with elephant populations, it loses a high-profile focus for its own work. So the report becomes not one about what it means to have healthy populations of African elephants, but about what the IUCN thinks could explain the figures. The underlying assumption is that the figures must be wrong. The obvious explanation, that African elephant populations are relatively healthy, is not even raised as a possibility!

Here are the solutions to the supposed “puzzle”, as speculated by IUCN. The elephants may be crowding together for safety – from humans, of course. No evidence for this extraordinary leap in the dark is provided. However, it is described as a “worrying” possibility. Bad news!

Second, the figures are based on data that covers “just over half” the area where elephants are found. But this is larger than

previous estimates. Most reasonable people would conclude that it is therefore likely to be more accurate. And since these population estimates are higher, surely that is good news. But apparently, no. We need to focus instead on the “gaps in our knowledge”. In some areas of Africa, there is virtually no information about population sizes. More bad news.

The opinion of no other organization or expert is included to provide “balance” in the report. Presumably this is because they might point out the obvious conclusion that populations of African elephants appear to be in pretty good shape and are neither “endangered” nor “threatened”. They might even point out that the total protection advocated by animal rights activists is inappropriate for sustaining elephant population numbers.



Thanks to organizations like the BBC, the public is led to believe that the population figures are unreliable and that elephants need to be “saved” by protectionism. Media organizations are the willing agents of the animal rights extremists. With the BBC, scaremongering wins over good news and common sense. □

Editorial: Tantine Beeb et tante Sallys (ou la BBC et le jeu de massacre)

par Eugène Lapointe

Au Royaume-Uni, la BBC a été critiquée tant pour son parti pris politique que pour ses exagérations, alors qu’elle l’est, au niveau international, pour son anti-américanisme et ses reportages unilatéraux sur le Moyen-Orient. Nous pouvons y

ajouter sa façon de couvrir les problèmes environnementaux, qui semble toujours reposer sur la conviction inébranlable que le protectionnisme supprime l’utilisation durable.

Un rapport (du 4 décembre 2003) sur les populations d'éléphants d'Afrique en est le plus récent exemple. Alors que ce rapport nous apportait de bonnes nouvelles, il a été retourné au point de nous en donner des mauvaises. La BBC semble croire obstinément que les populations d'éléphants sont constamment menacées par des forces extérieures – chasseurs, braconniers et ventes d'ivoire. Ainsi, les informations fournies par l'UICN, selon lesquelles les populations d'éléphants pourraient être de plus de 50 pour cent supérieures aux estimations antérieures, n'ont pas été annoncées comme une bonne nouvelle, ou comme la preuve que la conservation internationale oeuvre au maintien des populations, mais comme un "puzzle", un casse tête.

Chez les média, "puzzle" est un nom de code pour "ce qui ne correspond pas à leurs convictions". Pour ceux d'entre nous qui soutiennent l'utilisation durable, ce n'est pas un puzzle de savoir que les populations d'éléphants sont en fait relativement abondantes.

Les effectifs des populations d'éléphants sont un "puzzle" pour la BBC parce qu'elle a, comme de nombreuses organisations du monde médiatique, volontairement gobé les salades des activistes des droits des animaux. Ainsi la BBC, en aucune circonstance, n'aurait su présenter le rapport de l'UICN comme une "bonne nouvelle". En le faisant, elle n'aurait plus suivi sa ligne éditoriale. Il fallait donc qu'elle trouve un moyen de la dénier.

La nouvelle est aussi devenue un "puzzle" parce que la BBC, comme bon nombre d'autres média, adore les mauvaises nouvelles. Une mauvaise nouvelle est une grande nouvelle. Un puzzle est quelque chose dont on peut se préoccuper. Se préoccuper d'un puzzle est presque aussi bien que se préoccuper des mauvaises nouvelles.

C'est pourquoi la BBC s'est mise à saper toute velléité de croire à la validité des chiffres fournis, en relatant l'histoire des éléphants dans un langage extrêmement précautionneux. Le rapport de l'UICN "suggère qu'ils pourraient être beaucoup plus nombreux". Peut-on être plus prudent encore? Vous pouvez être certains que si l'UICN avait conclu que les populations d'éléphants étaient inférieures à ce que l'on estimait précédemment, cette nouvelle aurait été donnée comme une certitude absolue. Elle serait apparue comme aussi solide que les dix commandements.

Une fois établi, le soi-disant "puzzle" doit être résolu. La spéculation est la meilleure façon d'y parvenir. Elle constitue donc le corps du rapport. Bien évidemment, la spéculation n'est pas une nouvelle, c'est une opinion.

Heureusement pour la BBC, l'UICN a aussi un intérêt fondamental à la perplexité quant à ses propres conclusions. S'il n'y avait pas de problèmes avec les populations d'éléphants, ses activités mêmes perdraient de l'intérêt. Ainsi, plutôt que de s'interroger sur ce que l'existence de populations abondantes d'éléphants d'Afrique signifie, le rapport se demande comment les chiffres peuvent s'expliquer. L'hypothèse sous-jacente est qu'ils pourraient être faux. Le fait que ces populations soient relativement abondantes n'est même pas envisagé comme possible, comme une explication évidente!

Quelles sont les solutions au "puzzle" supposé? Les voici comme le spéculait l'UICN. Les éléphants peuvent se rassembler pour leur sécurité – eu égard aux hommes, bien sûr. Aucun élément n'est fourni pour justifier ce bond extraordinaire dans l'obscurité. Il est toutefois décrit comme une possibilité "préoccupante". Mauvaise nouvelle!

Par ailleurs, les chiffres sont fondés sur des données qui ne couvrent “guère plus de la moitié” de la superficie où se trouvent des éléphants. Mais c’est davantage que pour les estimations antérieures. La plupart des gens raisonnables en concluraient qu’il est donc vraisemblable que les chiffres soient plus exacts. Et puisque les estimations sont supérieures, c’est certainement une bonne nouvelle. Mais non, apparemment. Nous devons plutôt nous concentrer sur les “lacunes de nos connaissances”. Pour certaines régions d’Afrique, il n’existe pratiquement aucune information sur la taille des populations. Encore une mauvaise nouvelle.

L’opinion d’aucun autre expert ou organisation n’apparaît dans le rapport pour “l’équilibrer”. C’est probablement parce qu’il

aurait pu souligner une conclusion évidente: les populations d’éléphants d’Afrique paraissent être en assez bonne forme et ne sont pas “menacées d’extinction”. Il aurait même pu faire remarquer que la protection totale défendue par les activistes des droits des animaux n’est pas appropriée pour assurer le maintien des effectifs des populations.

Le grand public doit à des organisations comme la BBC d’être conduit à penser que les chiffres de populations sont douteux et que les éléphants doivent être “sauvés” par le protectionnisme. Les médias sont les agents volontaires des extrémistes de la défense des droits des animaux. Avec la BBC, vaincre les bonnes nouvelles grâce aux alarmistes relève du bon sens. □

Editorial: La tía Bebe y su “rompecabezas” de Eugène Lapointe

La opinión pública del Reino Unido criticó a la BBC por su parcialidad y la exagerada tendencia a hilvanar historias poco creíbles, mientras que en el ámbito internacional se la critica por su anti-americanismo y su interpretación de la situación en medio oriente. En lo que a nosotros refiere, su cobertura sobre los asuntos ligados a la conservación se caracterizan por su posición proteccionista ante toda iniciativa de utilización sustentable.

El ejemplo más reciente es un informe aparecido el 4 de diciembre de 2003 sobre las poblaciones de elefante en Africa, donde las buenas noticias fueron transformadas en malas. La BBC parece obstinada en sostener que las poblaciones de elefante están bajo constante amenaza por parte de fuerzas externas – cazadores, caza furtiva y venta de

marfil. De hecho, un informe producido por la Unión Mundial para la Naturaleza (UICN) que manifiesta un crecimiento de las poblaciones de elefante africano de más del cincuenta por ciento comparado con las estimaciones hasta ahora disponibles, no fue interpretado como una evidencia de que las iniciativas de conservación internacional destinadas a dar sustentabilidad a las poblaciones son un éxito, sino que representan un “rompecabezas”.

En idioma periodístico, “rompecabezas” significa que “esto no condice con nuestro pensamiento”. Cabe señalar, que para quienes sostenemos los principios del uso sustentable el caso del elefante africano no representa un rompecabezas sino un indicador de que las poblaciones están en una situación relativamente saludable.

Las cifras relativas a las poblaciones de elefante africano son un “rompecabezas” para la BBC debido a que, al igual que otras organizaciones mediáticas, han sido seducidas por la posición de los activistas de los derechos del animal. Bajo estas circunstancias, la BBC jamás reconocería que el informe de la UICN es una “buena noticia”. Si lo hicieran, serían incoherentes con su línea editorial. Por lo tanto, se ven obligados a negar las buenas noticias.



La noticia también ha sido calificada de “rompecabezas” porque la BBC, como tantas otras organizaciones mediáticas, adora las malas noticias. Las buenas noticias jamás atraen al público. Las malas noticias sí. Un rompecabezas, entonces, es algo que debe preocuparnos. Preocuparse por un rompecabezas es tan bueno como preocuparse por una mala noticia.

Por lo tanto, la BBC relativiza la veracidad de toda cifra poblacional alentadora, y redacta la historia del elefante en un idioma extremadamente cuidadoso. El informe de la UICN “sugiere que (las poblaciones) podrían ser más numerosas”. ¿Podríamos transformar estas buenas noticias en algún tipo de advertencia? Pensemos por un momento que, por el contrario, si la UICN hubiera concluido que las poblaciones de elefante africano hubiesen caído a cifras inferiores a las estimadas, esta noticia hubiera sido presentada como una información redundante y categórica. Tan sólida como los Diez Mandamientos.

Una vez instalado en la opinión pública, el “rompecabezas” debe ser resuelto. La mejor manera entonces de resolverlo sería mediante la especulación. De esta manera, la especulación se convierte en el fundamento

del artículo. Por supuesto, la especulación no es una noticia, sino una opinión.

Afortunadamente para la BBC, la UICN también está interesada en que su informe sea relativizado, ya que si no existen problemas con el elefante, esta organización perdería su alto perfil en el debate conservacionista. Por lo tanto, el informe ya no estaría enfocado en la importancia de contar con poblaciones saludables, sino en la opinión de la UICN sobre las cifras actuales. De allí, solo queda e presumir que las cifras son incorrectas. La evidencia de que las poblaciones de elefante africano están en una situación relativamente saludable no ha sido considerada siquiera como algo posible!

Éstas podrían ser algunas de las soluciones del “rompecabezas”, tal como especula la UICN: Primero, los elefantes estarían concentrándose por cuestiones de seguridad – digamos que como consecuencia de la presión humana. Por supuesto, no hay evidencias que prueben que esto sea cierto. Sin embargo, se la describe como una posibilidad “preocupante”. Malas noticias!

Segundo, las cifras están basadas en datos tomados de la “mitad” del área de distribución del elefante. Aunque esta área es mayor que aquella que se utilizó para las primeras estimaciones. Por lógica, se puede concluir que las nuevas cifras son más precisas. Debido a que estas estimaciones indican una mayor cantidad de animales, esto representa una buena noticia. Pero aparentemente, no. Es necesario enfocar el artículo en los “huecos de nuestro conocimiento”. En algunas áreas de Africa, no hay información sobre el tamaño de sus poblaciones. Más noticias malas...

Cabe destacar que el artículo no incluye la opinión de una tercera organización o experto que brinde un “equilibrio” al informe. Supuestamente, esto se obvió para evitar el riesgo de que se reconozca que las poblaciones de elefante africano parecen estar en buena situación y no están ni “en peligro” ni “amenazadas”. También se correría el riesgo de que alguien opine que la protección total fomentada por los activistas de los derechos del animal es inapropiada para

sostener poblaciones estables de elefante africano.

Gracias a organizaciones como la BBC, se condiciona a la opinión pública para que ésta crea que las cifras no sean confiables y que los elefantes necesitan ser “salvados” por el proteccionismo. Muchas organizaciones mediáticas operan como agentes de los activistas de los derechos del animal. Gracias a la BBC, el alarmismo triunfa sobre las buenas noticias y el sentido común. □

Ruffled Fur

(Source: The Ottawa Citizen, Editorial Page A16, 2003.12.16)

It's encouraging to see a politician wear his beliefs on his sleeve -- or, in the case of Newfoundland MP John Efford, on his entire upper body. The newly appointed Natural Resources minister is taking some heat from animal welfare groups over his decision to wear a seal-fur coat to his first cabinet meeting on Saturday. But Mr. Efford is making no apologies, nor should he.

Sealing is a legal business in Canada, and Mr. Efford has long supported the commercial culling of seals which he believes eat millions of tonnes of fish, causing hardship for people who depend on the fishing industry for their livelihood. It would have been hypocritical if he had tried to hide his beliefs for the sake of political correctness. □

We'd all be better off if more politicians were equally candid.

Recipe for Reform

by James M. Beers
Wildlife Biologist

It is in the spirit of sharing in the upcoming celebration to “commemorate” the 30th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that I am sending this recipe to the US House of Representatives Resource Committee staff member who is assembling information on the Act.

Many of us have known since the late 1970's that the ESA was a disaster. Nothing has been “saved” and the toll on the people of the United States and the people in poor nations that house charismatic plants and animals has been increasingly unbearable. Simply put, we and the plants and animals it sequesters would be far better off without it.

That said, the following recipe for reform of the endangered species engine is offered. It is composed of seven ingredients that would replace the ESA. Like most good recipes, the ingredients are simple and come together to create a complementary whole. The assumptions and claims of the ESA were erroneous and any future actions in this arena must be taken with care.

1) Return management authority and primary legal jurisdiction for all plants and animals (except those named in Treaties [CITES is NOT a Treaty in the sense used in the Constitution]) to state governments where the Founding Fathers wisely placed them.

2) Couch any future (or continuing) endangered species Congressional concerns in terms of mandates to Federal land managers to employ on the Federal estate. Except in the miniscule Federal ownership where Exclusive Jurisdiction applies, Federal lands should be managed under the laws of the state in which they occur. State government lands should be encouraged to provide similar assistance to named species and private property owners should be encouraged to cooperate only through the offer of voluntary tax incentives. Leases, easements, grants, and acquisition by Federal agencies or their NGO surrogates like The Nature Conservancy should NOT be authorized. Not only are they ineffective for the purposes stated, they will (like ever increasing tax percentages) eventually end with a government that owns and rules everything, thereby supplanting “We the People” who established a limited government to provide us with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

3) Do not infer any governmental concern for any plant or animal grouping below the level of species. Leaving an opening for this in the past has allowed University professors

and bureaucrats to drive a mack truck of government costs and abuses through the opening that today looks like an interstate.

4) Do not allow any possibility for any taking of private property without compensation. It was an extremely important matter that the Founding Fathers placed these words in the Constitution. Any Federal desire to importune private citizens or their property for animal or plant purposes should be voluntary and should not exceed annual tax incentives without any strings to sign over rights to the government or its surrogates. If

the cost of all the havoc wreaked by the ESA in just the past decade had been charged to taxpayers as the Constitution demands, the fever for endangered species would have waned long ago. If the government cannot pay for all its “wants” then perhaps it and its special interest supporters are living beyond their means.

5. Severely limit any statutory or regulatory penalties for failing to adhere to Federal plant and animal mandates. The recent FWS Federal raiders who invaded a couple's home for orchid suspicions or the recent BLM enforcers who molested a barefoot boy over an ORV permit issue such that the boy wound up in a wheelchair are current examples of Federal law enforcement abuses rooted in the hype surrounding endangered species law enforcement. Interior and Agriculture enforcement agencies were transformed in the 70's and 80's into Untouchables-wannabees by the NGO's and bureaucrats searching for stricter laws, broader law enforcement retirement coverage, and larger Federal budget authorizations. Today we are reaping this whirlwind and reversing it will necessitate reforms beyond the scope of replacing the ESA with an American alternative.



6. Any reintroduction or release of any plant or animal in any state should only be with the consent of the state government. The outrage of the Federal government imposing wolves on states and private landowners who strongly object to and are harmed by such actions belongs to the actions of Dictators throughout history. Our Constitution was designed to prevent such central government abuse of a free people.
7. Reconfigure the US United Nations CITES delegation to reflect a program of sustainable uses and proactive management of all plants and animals. The sovereignty of Tanzania and Iceland should be respected regarding their plants and animals every bit as much as we value our own sovereignty. Our UN delegation should push a P-R/D-J type excise custom tax on plant and animal imports, which is then redistributed to countries of origin for conservation projects. Enforcement is simple in this regard, failure to use the money for conservation means no future funds. Cooperation and management, not coercion, is the best road to an abundant future for us all.

While we are discussing recipes, think about doing the same to the Marine Mammal Protection Act that has rivalled the destruction and resource waste of the ESA. Return inshore species (manatees, sea otters,

polar bears, and some seals) to the states in whose waters they occur. Federal management of high seas species in US and international waters should be proactive management for sustainable harvests and to attain numbers and distributions that encourage commercial fishery recovery and management objectives in the world's oceans.

Think also about the Animal Welfare Act. Such Federal legislation should only cover Federally funded animal uses, period. The Federal interest in the interstate aspects of things like dog breeding, cockfighting, animal husbandry, circuses, rodeos, etc. should be limited to enforcing state statutes just as the Mann Act does for prostitution and the Lacey Act does for fish and wildlife.

Finally, if after reading this anyone can imagine in their wildest dreams that Invasive Species legislation is anything but a disaster in the wings, I suggest somewhere like Germany or Britain where such "progressive" thought is more advanced would probably be more to their liking. Such things as we have discussed here should never have been allowed to take hold in this country and reforming them immediately should be the duty of every concerned American. □

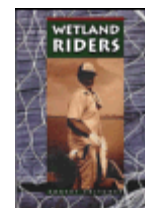
Happy 30th, ESA!

**New IWMC Bookstore Announcement:
www.iwmc.org/bookstore**

Wetland Riders - by Robert Fritchey

An uncompromising book that exposes the origin and early successes of a movement that threatens America's seafood industry. □

Read Review at: <http://www.iwmc.org/>



Obituaries

'Free Willy' star Keiko dies in bay of Norway

Name: **Keiko**

Age: Unknown

Cause of Death: Long term, excessive stress created by harassment from animal rights zealots who attempted to force the animal to do something it did not want to do - live without handouts. Keiko was literally kicked out of his sheltered home into the cold north Atlantic and forced to wander aimlessly about, looking for someone to feed him.

Career Highlights: His very successful career as a public entertainer led to a brilliant career as a movie star. However, at the height of that career, he became associated with bad company and was under investigation for brain washing children, inappropriate fundraising and misuse of money donated by the public.

Left Behind: Keiko leaves behind him, to cry over his death, numerous fundraisers and bogus-scientists who lost their main fundraising source.

'Cash Cow' killed in a political crash

Name: **Cash Cow**, known under the nickname of "**Seal Hunt**"

Age: Very old

Cause of Death: Killed in a political crash created by Canadian Minister Efford who, quite correctly, wore a sealskin coat for his introduction as a new Canadian cabinet minister. Various others were victims of the crash, including British Parliamentarians and a handful of American Senators.

Career Highlights: For almost thirty years, Cash Cow has been infected with the Brigit Bardot Syndrome, which led to the mad-seal disease. The disease has the same effect as the mad-cow disease, causing permanent brain damage in various British Parliamentarians and American Senators who passed mindless and self-serving resolutions against the Canadian seal hunt.

Left Behind: Survivors include the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Obituary

Name: **Money-Spinner**, known under the nickname of "**RCMP Hat**"

Age: Very young

Cause of Death: Killed by a decision of the Canadian government not to bow to pressure from animal rights zealots, to switch the RCMP Hat from muskrat fur to synthetic fur.

Career Highlights: Money-spinner had a very short career. The poor jerk was not given a chance to go very far in life...as the Canadian government made a swift and lethal decision for social and environmental justice.

Left Behind: Survivors include: newly impoverished save the muskrat campaigners, and the Canadian government, which has a new lease on political life in the 21st century.

2004 Upcoming Meetings

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 2-6 February | Enforcement Experts Group Meeting
Shepherdstown, West Virginia, USA |
| 10-14 February | Meeting of the FAO/COFI Sub-Committee on Fish Trade
Bremen, Germany |
| 16-20 February | 14 th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee
Namibia |
| 2-4 March | 13 th meeting of Council, NAMMCO
Torshavn, Faroe Islands |
| 11 March | World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting Activities
Nuremberg, Germany |
| 15-19 March | 50 th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee
Geneva, Switzerland |
| 15-24 March | 69 th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference |
| 29 March-2 April | 20 th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee
Johannesburg, South Africa |

- 1-3 April** Berlin ENCOS 2004 1st European Networks Conference on Sustainability in Practice "The Conditions and Requirements for a New European Level of Capacity Building" (www.ENCOS2004.net)
- 24-29 May** 17th Meeting of the IUCN Crocodile Specialists Group Darwin, Australia
- 3-5 June** 8th World Tuna Trade Conference Bangkok, Thailand
- 13-22 July** IWC 56th Annual Meeting Sorrento, Italy
- 2-14 October** 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES Bangkok, Thailand
- 17-25 November** 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress Bangkok, Thailand

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IWMC World Conservation Trust

A global voice for sustainable use of the earth's resources and the preservation of the cultures and traditions that depend upon them.