

# Sustainable eNews

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Promoting Sustainable Use

March 2004



IWMC

World Conservation Trust

## Welcome to the 165th Party to CITES

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has deposited its instrument of accession to CITES on 1 March 2004 and will so become the 165th Party to CITES on 30 May 2004.

## Editorial: Campaigners Can Give It, But Can They Take It?

by Eugène Lapointe

**T**he Sierra Club is in disarray. Allegedly threatened with a corporate takeover by an unholy alliance of animal rightists and anti-immigration activists, it is contending not only with its first hotly contested National Board elections but also with lawsuits and questions over internal ethical practices.

Chief orchestrator of the takeover is Paul Watson, the angry old man of environmental activism, who has his own plans to use the Sierra Club's annual spending of more than \$80 million. Traditional directors were prodded into a state of anxiety by Watson's published remarks that: "We're only three directors away from controlling that board. We control one-third of it right now. We'll change the entire agenda of that organization."

Sierra Club President Larry Fahn responded by writing to all members in Chapter newsletters. "Several organizations whose focus is not the environment have endorsed candidates in the club's board elections and are urging their supporters to join the club as a means to influence club policy in line with their own agendas."



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Such a tactic, if true, will sound familiar to those in the whaling industry who will remember how another advocacy group forced an international organization to begin doing the opposite of what it was obliged to do. In the 1980s, Greenpeace paid the membership dues of developing countries to join the International Whaling Commission, set up to manage whaling, and thereby institute a moratorium on commercial whale harvests that prevents it.

Has Mr. Fahn made his case? He tiptoed around the issue by subjectively talking about the supposed backers rather than the views of the candidates themselves, and listed organizations that “may” be attempting to intervene in the elections. The groups include PETA, the Federation for Immigration Reform, National Immigration Alert, HempflagUSA.org (which apparently promotes marijuana legalization) and National Alliance (which is described as an advocate of “ideology from a white racial perspective”).

Mr. Fahn appeals to members to cast their votes in a way that “demonstrates to outside groups that they cannot influence our organization.” At the end of the letter is a note that three Board candidates filed a lawsuit arguing that Sierra Club has no right to cast aspersions by providing members with the names of these organizations. It also seeks to prohibit internal newsletters, e-mail or web pages from reporting on the issue. Mr. Fahn and Carl Pope have also been sued. Nevertheless, a subgroup called Groundswell Sierra sent out 500,000 postcards to members to communicate Mr. Fahn’s views.

The infiltrators campaign is apparently being run by “Sierrans for US Population Stabilization” (SUSPS), led by Paul Watson and other Board Directors Ben Zuckerman and Doug LaFollette. They have posted their arguments on [www.sierrademocracy.org](http://www.sierrademocracy.org). The

Sierra Club has traditionally been neutral on the immigration question but Canadian-born Paul Watson and his collaborators oppose immigration into the USA as a means of protecting the environment from over-population. Watson himself is not up for reelection until 2006.



What should be made of all this? The three candidates targeted by Mr. Fahn complain of smear tactics. While they all have strong positions on population controls, they also have views on other environmental issues (none of which would appeal to supporters of sustainable use). It is hard to see why racists would back a liberal African-American campaigner who has received awards from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Are the Sierra Club establishment figures overreacting?

American environmental campaigners usually sue federal agencies, not each other, so the travails of the Sierra Club are groundbreaking. Environmental advocacy groups can give it, but can they take it? And should these groups, which are evidently political in their nature, still qualify for charitable tax status when they are using the donated money to sue one another?

Members can vote for up to five candidates in the election, which runs from 4 March to 21 April. They are all politely listed as “Nominating Committee Candidates” or “Petition Candidates”. This can be roughly translated as a choice between the establishment figures and the radical outsiders who had to get 360 members to sign on to their nominations. With only around 5-10 per cent of the Sierra Club’s 750,000 members bothering to vote in its elections, anything could happen.

## "Easter Eagles" aided by Police and Volunteers in Scotland

**P**olice, local volunteers, and bird watchers on an island off the coast of Scotland have formed a cooperative way to fight crime and support their local endangered wildlife. James Doherty, who writes for The Scotsman, has reported that this effort is helping to protect the nests of the white headed sea eagle, which was extirpated from the island of Mull 63 years ago, and then reintroduced back in 1975. Sadly, the birds were then immediately targeted by egg collectors, whose activities threatened the eagles' status once again.

Egg collecting is an illicit hobby in Europe, and has been noted to occur throughout the North Atlantic, from the UK through the Faeroes and Iceland. The "hobby" can be extremely lucrative, since stolen eggs of birds of prey such as eagles and gyrfalcons are sold for high prices to collectors. The practice endangers these rare species.

IWMC congratulates the residents and the Strathclyde Police on the island of Mull for their efforts at keeping watch over the nests of the white headed sea eagle. Doherty notes that "Operation Easter", which was instituted in 1995, is a program in which police, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Forest Enterprise, Wings Over Mull Birds of

Prey and Conservation Centre, and local people, all work together to track down these thieves and prevent them from getting access to the nests. The effort has been aided by the Land Rover auto manufacturing company, as one of these vehicles has been donated to help people reach nests in areas of rough terrain, and keep an eye on them as the eggs are laid and before the chicks are hatched. Last season, 26 eaglets were hatched on Mull.



Volunteers now also have cell phones with which to immediately call for help when nest robbers are suspected to be in an area. Operation Easter is a wonderful example of local people protecting their own resource, which is incidentally, an important economic asset as well, since eco-tourism brings many outsiders to the island of Mull, specifically to see these special birds. The Wings Over Mull Birds of Prey and Conservation Centre is open from Easter through October, and operates as a bird rehabilitation centre as well as a public education resource.

Good Job, and Best Wishes, to the Mull protectors of the white-headed sea eagle.

## When all else fails, say it's cruel The Cultural Preference Ploy

**R**une Frovik, Secretary of the High North Alliance, has invited famous BBC commentator on wildlife issues, Sir David Attenborough, to witness a Norwegian minke whale hunt this coming season, so that he may see first hand that the practice is not cruel. Attenborough has written the forward to "Troubled Waters" the newest attempt by united environmentalist and animal rights NGOs to disparage whaling as an inhumane pursuit.

Sir David has declared that whaling is inevitably "cruel", and claims all whaling should be stopped because it cannot be conducted humanely. He has also opined that those who whale are uncivilized beings. This is the usual cultural intolerance displayed by the anti-whaling crowd, for whom no biological data are sufficient cause to form another opinion.

This approach by the anti-whaling crowd comes after years of improvement in the time to death records of whales that are taken by Norwegian and Japanese whalers. "Time to death" is itself a misleading phrase, since those who are opposed to whaling have declared that "death" is only certifiable when all movement of the body has ceased. Those who are experienced in butchering animals, are well aware that as soon as the central nervous system is irreparably destroyed, parts of the body will usually continue to twitch, jerk, and convulsively move, even though the animal has lost consciousness and is brain dead from the trauma and loss of oxygen to the brain due to concussion of the weapon, and interruption of the blood delivery system. The experienced animal handler knows this, and can be assured of the animal's brain death by either verifying that the eye of the animal displays no reflex when touched, or by the convulsive movement itself.

Of course, those who have no experience in any kind of animal killing do not possess this knowledge, and to them, the fact of death is only verifiable on cessation of all movement.

Insistence that cessation of all movement is the only valid criterion for "time to death" is their story, and they are going to stick with it. After all, this argument worked to convince the public that their construction of cruelty in the harp seal hunt was biologically correct. They are depending on the same story regarding whaling.

In recent years, representatives of both the United States and the United Kingdom indicated that "they remained opposed to commercial whaling, regardless of the science". This pretty much sums up the regard of the anti-whaling crowd for science and respect for the Convention, as well as their respect for the rights and preferences and traditions of other cultures. The Like Minded Group, of which the UK is a charter member, shall never change its message on whaling. Their arguments have left science and gone to "ethics".

IWMC applauds Rune Frovik for extending his gracious invitation to Sir David Attenborough, but we predict that the knight will never accept this reasonable challenge to see for himself how modern whaling is conducted. He will not change his mind, or his own cultural preference to regard the whalers of the world as "uncivilized", which actually means, "non-British". Sir David must be missing the good old colonialist days, when nobody really cared about what you imposed on other cultures and values...

## CITES COP13 meeting

**IWMC** would like to remind the CITES Management Authorities that the deadline for submission of draft resolutions, amendment proposals and other documents for consideration at the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties is **5 May 2004**.

CITES Parties that will require financial support to send representatives to COP13 are requested to contact the Secretariat and indicate their need for financial assistance, specifying whether support is requested for one or two delegates. The deadline for submission of requests is **31 May 2004**. Only request that have been submitted by that date will be considered.

## Evaluating Endangered Species Lists A clarification on our part

The IWMC February e-newsletter contains an opinion piece on the degree of convergence between official endangered species lists and biological reality. IWMC commentator Jaques Berney's article used information sent to us by Fred Bonner, who occasionally writes for the Washington Daily News. Some of Mr. Bonner's comments on the success of leatherback turtles as seen off the coasts of Nova Scotia were apparently more optimistic about the turtles' status than is appropriate, according to researchers at Dalhousie University, whom he interviewed and quoted. We regret that IWMC was somewhat misled by Mr. Bonner's statements, but wish to point out that Mr. Berney's piece does state that "science is slowly being recognized as the only valid measure of success for individual species and their ecosystems. IWMC hopes that in the near future, "Endangered Species" lists shall more closely approximate biological reality."

## Ivory Issue: Kenya's problems could be solved

Don't burn it this time! Remember when Richard Leakey worked in the Kenya Wildlife Service, and made a big show of burning tons of confiscated ivory? It had originated with Kenya's elephants, of course, those unfortunately unmanaged and unprotected beasts that often get into trouble with local people, who refer to them as "rogues". They call on their government officials to kill them to save human lives. And of course, some unfortunate elephants have been killed illegally by poachers. All the tusks were confiscated and added to the pile. Now, there is another huge, 30 ton pile that has resulted from similarly poor elephant management, and Kenya has talked seven of its neighbors (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Tunisia, and Uganda) into supporting its position at the upcoming CITES (October, Bangkok) that there should

be no legalized sales of ivory. Their reason....they claim that it would encourage more poaching. So far, this position has had no practical backup.



The Nairobi East African Standard (March 6, 2004) reported that "Environment, Natural Resources and Wildlife minister Newton Kulundu said the rest of the haulage is from animals that have died of disease and other natural causes, and rogue elephants killed by the Kenya Wildlife Service personnel as a result of the now rampant human-wildlife conflicts." According to the minister, Kenya needs another 700 wildlife officials to handle the conflicts between humans and wildlife. And money is short in Kenya for such problems, so the parks people are looking for donations with which to buy modern surveillance equipment, and to pay the additional personnel.

Lack of adequate law enforcement in Kenya resulted in a massive loss of their elephants to poaching - whereas they had some 167,000 animals at the time of their independence, by 1989 the herd had dwindled to only 16,000 animals. That figure has now risen to 28,000 elephants. Minister Kulundu claims that if the ban on sales of ivory should be lifted, that there would be massive slaughter. Southern African countries continually pressure Kenya to vote for lifting the ban, but Kenya's position is that there has been a general failure in Africa to implement the MIKE program (Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants). Sadly, this is true of Zimbabwe, where the world has watched blatant corruption and widespread elephant killings. But it does not have to happen that way.

IWMC is very familiar with the elephant and law enforcement problems in Africa. We believe that conservation programs should pay for themselves, because outsiders just do not have the incentive to support such

programs that a range state has, to keep its animal resources in balance with its citizens. If ivory stores became a legal commodity, the price would go down, and there would be less incentive for poaching. Further, the money from confiscated ivory should be allocated directly to improving law enforcement, poacher conviction rates, and applied surveillance technology. Ivory money should not go into a general fund, for bureaucrats to use for irrelevant purposes. The elephants that died should not have died in vain...at least some good should come of it, and that good should be the protection and administrative integrity and determination of a central government committed to elephant conservation. Those 30 tons of ivory should be converted into money to support a modern, efficient law enforcement effort in Kenya's wild lands. To waste 30 tons of confiscated ivory by burning it would do nothing to solve the problems of rogue control, poaching, and illegal exports of ivory on the world market.

## Seal Time, 2004

**W**hat is a harp seal worth? Depends on who is counting his money at the end of the season. For sealers, the price of pelts could be better, but they are worth more now than they were in 1983, when the IFAW brought the hunt to a temporary close. How did they do it? The IFAW, led by Brian Davies, took his anti-sealing campaign to European people who saw his bloody photos, and who believed his every word about alleged cruelties of the hunt. They became so fired up that they exhorted the EU Parliament to pass a ban on the products of animals under the age of one year. IFAW claimed victory "for the seals". Actually, that organization and Greenpeace made millions of dollars on the seal hunt that year. It was worth a great deal more to them than it had been to sealers, even in good times.

There were 1.8 million harp seals off the eastern coast of Canada that year. Over the next twenty years, the market slowly came back here and there, in the orient and even, somewhat, in parts of Europe. But for the Newfoundlanders and the Labrador Inuit, there was not enough money to make it worth their while to hunt on the scale that had been common before 1983. And the seals, virtually unhunted, continued to breed and to multiply, and to eat fish and krill, and to thrive while fishermen and fish all felt the impact of their burgeoning population. The harp seal population off the eastern coast of Canada is now over 5 million strong, and this is not a good thing.

In the Gulf, and soon off the Front, sealers are geared up to take as many animals as they can, hoping that the markets for pelts, meat, and seal oil are going to be worth their time and fuel, labor and effort. They still have to pay their bills and get ready for the coming fishing season. They need whatever money from the seal hunt they can glean, but it will not match the funds that professional protest organizations are already realizing from this year's seal time.

Paul Watson, their despised and bloated enemy, has had to cancel plans to sail one of his tubs to the hunt, and once again, make a classic nuisance of himself. He and his crew were hoping for seal time media attention, but the ship was damaged during his attempt to do vandalism against the Japanese scientific whaling fleet in the Antarctic. Too bad for him, good for Newfoundland. The fat man won't swagger through seal season, misrepresenting the need, the purposes of the



sealers, and the ways in which they make their kills. No profit for the Sea Shepherd here this year, although sealing season will be profitable for those who are still around to protest it. If sealing were actually to stop, they would be fiscally bereft. It has been a historic windfall for activists each spring, especially since Canada has encouraged sealers to take nearly a million animals within a three-year period. The hunt for harp seals is a desperate attempt to bring some balance back into the ecosystem of the western Atlantic. That balance was destroyed when the hunt was diminished due to protest campaigns, and now even the seals are beginning to suffer the consequences of over-crowding. IWMC wishes the sealers of Canada all the best this year. They deserve to profit from a traditional, sustainable activity. We hope they take their quota, for their sake and for that of the harp seals, and the fish, birds, and whales. We wish them luck in cutting the herd down to a size appropriate for today's ocean environment. Good luck, Canada.

## Noteworthy

### **23-28 May 2004: World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF) Lisbon, Portugal**

Artisanal fisheries represent a millenarian form of social organization, food production and commercial exchange since the settlement of fishing communities in coastal zones. Due to their environmental and cultural relation with fish resources and the use of sustainable fishing gears and methods, artisanal fisheries is seen as the fisheries of the future.

### **15-17 June 2004 Organic Aquaculture and Sea Farming Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**

... another milestone event for the global aquaculture and fisheries industry?  
Email: [infish@tm.net.my](mailto:infish@tm.net.my) or [infish@po.jarring.my](mailto:infish@po.jarring.my)

## IWC Whale Quota Decisions

Both Population Strength and Human Needs  
Must Be Necessary Determinants

The International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling was formed in 1946 to first promote, and then to ensure, the conservation of large cetaceans. The International Whaling Commission has since that time, made some mistakes, sponsored some vitally important scientific research, and come to an impasse that is political in motivation, and both social and biological in impact. In some recent years, decisions were made that do not necessarily promote the conservation of cetaceans of any size, and in some cases, have not been fair to societies that have traditionally lived on whale meat and blubber.

This year in Sorrento, the bipolarity that has become routine can be expected to once again, impede conservation and ignore scientific judgment. Here is what IWMC wishes would take the place of that situation:

The American Inuit of the village of Point Lay are asking for recognition of their cultural need to take a bowhead whale as part of the aboriginal subsistence quota of the Alaskan Eskimo Whaling Commission. This would not necessarily mean that the quota would be increased, as some of the villages on the approved list do not always take their full share, and there are always some "strikes" left over from the previous season. The AEWK agrees that the Point Lay villagers should have their whale. Their need is both nutritional and cultural, and their whaling tradition is well documented back into history. It undoubtedly goes far back of written history, into the time of their early life on the North American continent. Perhaps, some 5,000 years ago. NOAA scientists have determined that an even larger quota could be

taken, due to the healthy Bowhead increase that is an ongoing fact. IWMC urges the IWC to unite in granting the village of Point Lay the right to resume their own hunt for a bowhead.

Each year since the moratorium on commercial whaling, the Japanese government has requested that 50 minke whales be allotted to four traditional whaling villages whose people have suffered immensely since the "temporary" moratorium went into effect. This respectful and urgent request has always been termed an "interim allocation", on the assumption that the moratorium shall be lifted on the basis of both healthy stocks and development of a reasonable oversight program to control the actions of whalers. This has not happened. Each year, the slim majority in the IWC has denied this request, as part of their objection to resumption of commercial whaling. This stubborn and inhumane action is entirely political, and a blatant display of power to deny good people their traditional food source. It is not because of fears that the minke whales would be depleted or damaged in any way through this activity. Consequently, in order to determine the health of the local north Pacific minke stock, Japanese scientific research is annually conducted on this 25,000 strong population, and much has been learned about its part in that ecosystem. The by-products (meat and blubber) of that hunt have been sold in markets to which these villages have access, to make up for the fact that IWC members wish them to be deprived of this abundant resource.



The people in the village of Point Lay deserve their whale products, every bit as much as do those people on the coasts of Japan. It won't matter to the whales whether their tissues are sold or freely distributed in the communities. In both cases, scientists are sure that the population shall not be adversely impacted. And in both cases, it is certain that human happiness and well being shall be increased through access to their traditional foods, through action in their own cultural means of procuring them, and through the knowledge

that the rest of the world respects their rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

IWMC urges that the original mandates of the ICRW shall be followed in this and future meetings of the IWC. Management decisions should be made on the basis of science, and with respect for the needs of those people whose traditions include sustainable use of whales.

## Outstanding conservationists awarded Order of the Bighorn, Alberta, Canada

In 1982, the Alberta government established the Order of the Bighorn to acknowledge contributions to fish and wildlife conservation that enrich the lives of Albertans. Traditionally, recipients have demonstrated a commitment to conservation over many years.

**Garry Hackler** has been closely involved with fish and wildlife conservation in Alberta for many years. He is noted for the positive effect he has had on Alberta's youth, providing guidance through his conservation activities, educational efforts and personal example.

**Ed Scarlett** has been involved with Alberta fish and game clubs in many capacities for about 40 years, including the Ponoka, Manning and Sherwood Park Fish and Game Associations, and the Foothills Gun Club.

When people think of hunting, they often think of **Ryk Visscher**, past president of the Alberta Professional Outfitters Society. For many years, Ryk has worked to promote ethics in hunting and enhance the image of

hunters and the role they play in conserving wildlife. He has also developed and delivered mentor programs for a number of wildlife organizations, to introduce youth and first-time hunters to hunting in a positive way.



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**Don Andersen** is well known as a friend and advocate for trout and streams in west-central Alberta. Don often volunteers to help biologists with fish surveys and planting trout eggs in his area. With Trout Unlimited, he

organized more than 100 volunteer weekend work parties to rebuild stream banks by planting trees and vegetation to restore banks to their original condition.

Personnel at **Canadian Forces Base Suffield** have demonstrated outstanding environmental stewardship and leadership for many years, in addition to regular military operations. Indeed, the 2,690 sq. km of native grass prairie that makes up the base is home to numerous species of wildlife and plants.

**Congratulations to all of you.**

## IWMC.com Forum Section "One Trapper's View Point" by James A. Gibb

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The environmentalists are choosing their battles and waging war on modern society. They are picking targets of opportunity around the world and convincing the public that the use of a resource will threaten them. The challenge for true conservationists is to understand this and band together in order to counter this movement. If we do not begin to understand this agenda, then one by one we will all be picked off.

To view the complete article please visit our online forum at:  
[www.iwmc.org/sustain/IWMC-Forum](http://www.iwmc.org/sustain/IWMC-Forum)

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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.