APHA'S STAYING ON THE TRACKS

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This year is rapidly drawing to a close. Hopefully you've all had safe, successful, and educational hunting seasons, wherein many memories were made and future plans were formulated. What's mostly in season now is some well-deserved rest, necessary repairing and reorganizing, and ……. conventions.

if you haven't already secured lodging, don't forget to check the AirBnB and Vrbo websites for available options as many hotels may already be full, and these options can be more affordable too. Also, it's worth checking if you can book lodging on whatever airline's website you have booked airfare on, as they often offer good deals, with the bonus of receiving airline miles as well.

If you have extra time whilst attending the DSC Convention, consider a visit to the Dallas World Aquarium, which is within walking distance of the convention center. It's a fascinating place featuring terrestrial and aquatic exhibits, with the appreciated bonus that a portion of their proceeds helps to fund effective wildlife conservation efforts in Mexico and several Central American countries.

CURRENT ASSOCIATION SUPPORT CAMPAIGNS

In late November, an email was sent to all members announcing a new, artistic, and collectable way of supporting APHA – a beautiful bronze shield moulded after the logo, created by the talented sculptor Murray Grant. Sales of this valuable artwork have been vigorous thus far, with less than half of the 100 limited edition pieces now remaining. For more information and to reserve yours today, please visit this link on the website.

https://www.africanpha.com/bronze-shield

We also have association merchandise for sale that President Mike Angelides created the designs for, all featuring the boldly attractive APHA logo. Clothing and other items that you can view and purchase via the following link. Excellent gift ideas or for yourself, to rep the association at upcoming events and/or whilst you're in the field, hunting. I bought a pair of the leggings and can attest that they're of high quality. The best part is that your purchases also contribute financially to furthering APHA's mission and goals.

https://www.africanpha.com/apha-shop

LEGISLATIVE HAPPENINGS

On The Sticks:

The CITES Cop19 meeting mentioned in the last newsletter, held in Panama in November, included discussions about trade of elephants and hippos. Videos of various plenary sessions are available on YouTube if you are interested. Type Cop19 CITES in the search bar and you will be directed to them. Two useful email summaries of note from Corey Mason of DSC are included in the following links:

https://mailchi.mp/biggame.org/welcome-new-dsc-directors-officers-319240?e=603c4b7eba

https://mailchi.mp/biggame.org/welcome-new-dsc-directors-officers-319204?e=603c4b7eba

The USFWS proposed Revision to the Section 4(d) Rule for the African Elephant, summarized in the second link above, is fully readable in this link.

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/11/17/2022-25010/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-revision-to-the-section-4d-rule-for-the-african

It's a lengthy document, but it contains some interesting information and historical perspective on legislative requirements and changes pertaining to elephant imports. The proposed revision is threefold: suggesting increased protection and welfare measures for the trade in live elephants, clarifying the existing enhancement requirement for sport-hunted trophies, and incorporating designated parties into the decision making process.

This last consideration, especially, is one of concern for several African countries, as the USFWS is proposing trade only be permitted with CITES Category 1 countries. In order to qualify as Category 1, a country must designate at least one management authority and one scientific authority, prohibit trade in specimens in violation of the Convention, penalize such trade, and confiscate species illegally traded or possessed. Currently, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe are in this category. Category 2 countries meet some of these provisions, but not all. Currently, that includes Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia.

The USFWS is accepting comments on these proposed revisions electronically or via regular mail until 17 January 2023. And they are holding a public hearing via Zoom on 5 January 2023. Relevant details on how to participate in either of these methods are included in the link above. I am working on an official statement for APHA to submit, but I would encourage everyone to submit personal comments as well, and to urge your clients to do the same. The USFWS states that comments are not viewed as a simple count, and that cut and paste form letters or simple statements of support or opposition are not very useful. They are more interested in thoughtful suggestions, salient critiques, and/or experienced, qualified opinions. No doubt many of you and your hunters could personally contribute such potentially valuable information.

Comments are posted publicly and are readable by clicking on a link within the original link. Thus far, 29 comments have been received. Several are form letters provided by anti-hunting organizations. Some original comments are bizarre, like one that stated elephants must be

saved because we need their dung, and one that claimed most African animals are privately owned and not free-ranging. A couple are from people who have been on multiple hunting safaris in Africa and assert that they've seen the benefits elephant trophy hunting can confer to conservation. And many simply hatefully state that all hunting should be banned otherwise elephant extinction is imminent.

Apparently ban proponents didn't bother to fully read the proposed revisions, as the USFWS specifically states that they have no intention of banning elephant trophy imports. Their reasons given are that a ban could deprive range countries of important revenue, human-elephant conflict especially in agricultural areas will kill elephants despite any bans, and a ban would conflict with efforts to encourage positive elephant conservation efforts by range countries that are engaged in this trade and ensure it is well-managed.

In The Crosshairs :

The UK's anti-hunting push continues, as the Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition)Bill proposed by Henry Smith MP passed its second reading in the House of Commons on 25 November 2022. It was an appalling display of disinformation, persecutory hatred, and virtue signaling that is a sad and dangerous trend in anti-conservation campaigns these days. This bill now moves on to the committee stage, which is expected to take place in early 2023.

I wrote a piece for my Hank's Voice website pointing out some of the falsehoods supporters of this bill are purporting, and urging concerned people to seek the truth on these subjects and to reject the misguided manipulatory efforts of self-serving disinformation campaigners. You may read it, if interested, in the following link, which also includes a link to the video of the bill's reading and a link to a great video by The Conservation Imperative exploring what happened when a partial ban was politically pushed for in Botswana several years ago by anti-hunting activists.

https://www.hanksvoice.net/clarity

Amidst all the disinformation that was presented in the second reading of this bill, there was one MP, thankfully, who presented mostly truths. Sir Bill Wiggin, of North Herefordshire. You may view his presentation by clicking on the link I included within the Hank's Voice article. His comments occur between the 11:55 and 12:20 marks.

Of particular note is what occurs at the 12:14 mark, where he quotes pertinent and truthful information from APHA member Danene van der Westhuyzen, of Namibia. He summarizes his stance of opposition to this bill by saying that wildlife conservation is vital for African economies, and removing financial incentives to protect habitat, especially, threatens both wildlife and African people's livelihoods. Unfortunately, he left the meeting before a vote was taken, so the second reading passed unanimously. But if you'd like to send him a message thanking him for being a voice of reason amidst the madness, which would be a good, supportive gesture, his email is: bill.wiggin.mp@parliament.uk

Interestingly, the sponsor of this bill, Henry Smith, of Crawley, posted a link to the "full text" of the reading of this bill on his social media page. An attempt to fool people, seemingly, as it's not actually full. It excludes what Bill Wiggin said. Voicing your opposition to Henry can be accomplished by sending an email to him via: henry.smith.mp@parliament.uk

In his foolish, not truly full text of the second reading, there is testimony from these MPs who also support the bill with disinformation: Sir Mike Penning, Sarah Owen, Jane Stevenson, Mr. Clive Betts, Matt Rodda, and Dean Russell, should you or your clients wish to contact them as well.

NEW INITIATIVES

Patrol: Anti-poaching In Action is a new multimedia project focusing on poaching issues and efforts by hunting industry operators to counter this major conservation challenge in Africa. The first monthly newsletter is due out in December. You may subscribe to it via the following link, and also view related posts on The Conservation Imperative Facebook and Instagram pages.

https://www.patrolling.org/

I will be a regular contributor to this important educational effort and am eager to help present any APHA member stories about poaching challenges faced and counter efforts engaged in. Please send your ideas to me at hanksvoice@gmail.com The first issue in December will include an article I wrote about honey poaching in Tanzania, composed with some help from APHA members Mike Angelides, Harpreet Brar and Daniel Moore.

PARTING SENTIMENTS

December is typically a busy month, full of preparations for those who celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Boxing Day, etc. Or even if you don't observe any of those holidays, you likely have end of the year tasks to wrap up or travel plans to undertake. Safe and enjoyable times to you all, whatever your endeavors. May 2022 end well and be looked back upon fondly.