

## APHA'S STAYING ON THE TRACKS

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 5

October 2022

Welcome once again to another newsletter. Some of you are probably wrapping up your hunting seasons, preparing for conventions, and starting the whole inventory, repairs and maintenance cycle for the 2023 hunting season. Hopefully everyone has had a better year now that the pandemic problems seem to be mostly history.

Ebola virus may be problematic for residents or travelers in Uganda, however. As of 26 October, 109 cases were confirmed, with 30 deaths resulting. This outbreak is of the Sudan strain, for which there is currently no proven vaccine. One is being developed, however, primarily for health care workers who are at highest risk. As of 16 October, a three week lock down is in place for the Mubande and Kassanda districts. The United States' CDC is re-directing all US bound travelers who have been in Uganda in the previous 21 days to 5 airports for health screening.

### LEGISLATIVE HAPPENINGS

HR 8294, the US Interior Appropriations Bill, has not been decided upon by the Senate yet.

The Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting states that on 25 November 2022, the Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill will have its second

reading in the UK Parliament. They urge citizens to contact their MPs to vote in favor of the bill. So, if you know anyone in the UK, please urge them to ask their MPs to reject it. You may read the full bill by clicking on the link below and accessing the pdf version. Of note is section 1, part 4, attempting to define what exactly a trophy hunt is. A vague definition seemingly open to much interpretation.

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3300>

## CONSERVATION CONVERSATIONS

The 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will be held in Panama from 14 to 25 November 2022. Click on the link below for a brief overview and for options as to how you may stay updated on the proceedings if you wish. Of particular interest to African PHs would be the proposals regarding hippos and white rhinos.

<https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/events/briefing-on-the-world-wildlife-conference-19th-meeting-of-the-conference-of-the-parties-to-cites/>

The 20<sup>th</sup> African Wildlife Consultative Forum (AWCF) was held in Mozambique on 3-7 October 2022. APHA was invited, but invitees were in the field hunting and thus unable to attend. No public access to the proceedings is available, so I unfortunately cannot present any summaries.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION/OVER A SUNDOWNER

Recently, a study from the University of Cape Town was published in The Society for Conservation Biology journal, intriguingly titled – The hunter and the hunted: Using web-sourced imagery to monitor leopard (*Panthera pardus pardus*) trophy hunting. I hereby present a brief summary of it, but you may click on the link below to access the paper in full, if you'd like.

An emerging field is that of iEcology, wherein people try to extract useful information from online images. With the rising popularity of social media, wherein online image representation has improved five fold in merely the last decade alone, the photos we post have become treasure troves of data – for better or for worse.

The authors in this study attempted to see if images of leopard hunts could assist in monitoring and documenting leopard trophy hunts in Africa. Out of 10,000 images scraped from the internet, only 530 from six countries (Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) during the years 2011 – 2020 ultimately qualified for their analysis. Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe had the highest number of usable images. Of these, 99% were male leopards. Only 418 of the photos allowed for age estimation, but of those, 95% were classified as being greater than 7 years old. Although leopards less than 7 were detected prior to the adoption of age-based regulations in South Africa, no leopards of that age were noted afterwards.

No leopards were estimated to be in poor or very poor condition. Shot wound position could only be determined for 37% of the photos, but of those, 61% were shot in the abdomen and 23% on the shoulder. The majority of hunters (96%) were white males estimated to be greater than 40 years old. But the proportion of female hunters in the younger age classes (under 30 years) was significantly higher than in the older age classes, perhaps indicating an emerging demographic.

Rifles, bows and hounds were used in all countries except Tanzania and Zambia, where only rifles were used. Evidence of hunting with hounds was apparent in 9% of the analyzed photos, in the countries of Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

84% of the usable photos included the hunting outfitter's identifying information, with 167 different outfitters discerned. One of whom conducted 4% of the hunts (20 total). The top 25 outfitters accounted for 42% of all the hunts represented online.

Potential violations noted were small in number but included possibly a few leopards hunted during moratorium years in Zambia (2013 and 2015) and South Africa (2016 and 2017), possible illegal uses of hounds in Namibia and South Africa, and take of females in South Africa and Zambia.

There's a striking graph in the paper illustrating the rise of posting images on various social media platforms in relation to the advance of

cellular communications, digital camera and phone photography technology, and burgeoning social media apps. In the introduction, the second paragraph has some references as to how hunting can be (but might not always be) conservation.

An especially interesting point to ponder from a hunting industry perspective is that the authors state that South Africa is the only country in their study that has a national PHR – professional hunt registry, which is a public access record of the number and type of hunts per annum. Greater than half (57%) of all these nationally registered hunts in the last decade (2010-2020) have been posted online. The authors suggest that as hunting continues to be more scrutinized, such available evidence of regulation compliance may be useful in ensuring not just the sustainability of felid populations, but of the hunting industry as well.

<https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/csp2.12789>

## PARTING SENTIMENTS

A recent Facebook post on a sustainable use, conservation group page contained a video clip with excellent words from the President of the IUCN, Her Excellency Razan Al Mubarak. She is an accomplished falconer, but her words ring true for all forms of hunting. She stated the following. That falconry is a passion that is cultural and that is truly needed as a force for conservation, and that most, if not all, great conservationists started as hunters. To hunt, you need the predator,

the prey, and the natural environment, and we are losing nature at such an incredible rate. Everywhere. Largely due to land conversion to agriculture. But also a changing climate and mismanagement of our natural resources. Wise and truthful words to not only take to heart but to take afield, as responsible, respectful hunters genuinely concerned about nature's future.

Here is the link, although if you're not on Facebook, you won't be able to access it.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/theconservationimperative/permalink/1186994908689906/>

Safe, successful and memorable days afield to all who are still hunting. And some well-deserved rest to all who have finished their seasons.