

## APHA'S STAYING ON THE TRACKS

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Welcome to the first edition of the APHA newsletter, Staying On the Tracks, a monthly reporting and recollecting of news, memories and events relevant to APHA specifically, and hunting in Africa generally.

Contributions and suggestions from all members are most welcome, and will be gladly considered for inclusion, preferably submitted by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

### LEGISLATIVE HAPPENINGS IN MAY/JUNE:

#### Well-placed Shots:

- 1) The New York state legislature failed to advance the nonsensical Big Five African Trophies Act bill, SB 2814, on June 4, 2022. On May 12, APHA issued an open letter on this bill, posted on social media. The bill was an impotent one, since state law cannot override federal law and disallow for the importation of legally obtained hunting trophies, but it was still nice to not have it pass as perhaps some legislators are finally realizing the inane nature of these such bills.

2) In March of 2022, Switzerland's National Council approved a motion to consider banning the import and transport of hunting trophies for animals listed in Appendices I to III of the CITES convention. On May 30, the motion was rejected in the small chamber of the Swiss Parliament by a vote of 22 to 17. Although Hank's Voice drafted a thank you letter to them for this action, APHA President Mike Angelides was advised by others that such a letter would only be well-received if sent under the auspices of a larger NGO.

#### In the Crosshairs:

- 1) A Private Members' Bill called the Hunting Trophy Import (Prohibition) Bill, introduced by Conservative MP Henry Smith, is currently in its second reading in the House of Commons in the UK. According to a June 25, 2022 Mirror article, Environment Secretary George Eustice and campaigners will mark the introduction of the Bill with a series of events in the Commons the week of June 27, 2022. Of course it coincides with the seventh anniversary of Cecil the lion's death. Supposedly 100 celebrities have signed a letter in support of banning hunting trophy importation in Britain, but no one seems able to find a copy of this official letter? Only mentions of it exist in social media posts.
- 2) Britain's Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting, spearheaded by Eduardo Goncalves, updated their website in late June. It clearly states that their goal is to abolish all trophy hunting globally. Of course it uses manipulative language and outright lies in support of these actions.

3) The U.S. House of Representatives is working on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2023. The language contained in Section 439 of this bill would not allow the USFWS to utilize money from this budget to process lion and elephant import permits from Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia for FY 2023 (which runs from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023). For more insight into this issue, I contacted Erica Tergeson, the recently appointed Government Affairs Director for DSC. She explained that in some cases, private entities can pay for the cost of government permits to speed the process along, but in this case that would not be an option. She also emphasized that although, if approved, this restriction on funding could only apply for one fiscal year, when Congress runs out of time and doesn't pass each individual spending bill, it will issue a continuing resolution which, generally speaking, carries forward all of the underlying provisions. So this de facto ban could be extended pretty easily. Similar language was introduced in the Appropriations Bill for FY 2022 last year, but it was thankfully removed. It is unknown exactly who keeps putting this into the bill, other than democratic staff in general, in the House. Erica recommended that any concerned US citizens should contact their senators and congressmen to urge opposition to such restrictive language. Perhaps this is an excellent conversation to have with your clients, as no doubt these matters will keep resurfacing. Although major pro-hunting organizations such as DSC, SCI, NRA, etc. collectively encourage contacting legislators via easy fill-in forms on their platforms, personal, even if they are very brief, emails to those in government should be sent also. If your hunters are not already engaging in such important

activities, they really should, as it could help ensure that they may bring their trophies home.

## MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Travel is now getting easier, as the USA dropped the Covid-19 testing requirement for inbound air travelers from abroad beginning on June 12, 2022.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION/OVER A SUNDOWNER

Thanks to a member for emailing an interesting report on surveys done on American attitudes towards hunting to be considered for this issue. The original file, although containing valuable information to ponder, is lengthy. A link to it is included in this newsletter, but for convenience, I hereby summarize some of the basic, potentially useful points it contains.

The report contained information from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the National Rifle Association's Hunter's Leadership Forum, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, and the USFWS Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Program. American residents dwelling in

various situations ranging from urban to rural were surveyed, spanning various time periods between 1995 and 2019. Plus results from a pro-hunting vs. anti-hunting debate were summarized.

Demographic trends showed that population numbers plus their ages and levels of urbanity were increasing. Along with rising numbers of minorities and immigrants. Traditional attitudes such as managing wildlife populations to benefit humans, and prioritizing human needs, were found to be decreasing in popularity as compared to mutualistic attitudes wherein people value the sense of companionship they get from animals and consider it more rewarding to help animals than to help people.

Overall, over the past two and a half decades, those surveyed largely approved of legal, regulated hunting (70 to 80%). Particularly so if it was hunting of prey species, not predators, and if it was done for obtaining food, wildlife management, or protecting humans or their property (70 to 87%). Lower approval rates existed for sport (50%), the challenge (40%) or for the trophy (30%). Methods with the lowest approval rating were hunting over bait and hunting in high-fenced areas. Type of residence influenced approvals, but still 72% of urbanites and 79% of suburban dwellers showed support of hunting. And rural residents, of course, were the highest at 85%. Interesting findings, as so often anti-hunters insist that their attitudes represent the majority. That was not the case with these surveys.

In other results, 81% of respondents considered themselves in support of animal rights, yet 93% of Americans eat meat, 71% wear leather,

and 87% approve of hunting for meat. All of these practices are in opposition to true animal rights stances, so it is apparent that many people are confusing animal rights with animal welfare.

An interesting thing about these surveys is that these responses did not change dramatically since the late 1990s to recent times. Perhaps a reminder that we should be careful and remember that social media and the media, in general, may not be truly reflecting how the general public does think and feel?

Those who wrote this report suggested that we should base our communications on how Americans ACTUALLY think about hunting instead of how we THINK they may think about it. And that we don't need to change attitudes as much as we need to find ways to affirm them. To assert that legal hunting is different than poaching, that it does not drive species or populations to extinction because it's regulated, to ensure diversity in spokespeople, and to try bridging any gaps between hunters and non-hunting environmentalists. To be mindful of social media as a double edged sword, and to make any opponents you might have define the terms they're using, such as – what exactly do they mean by trophy hunting? Some potentially valuable points to ponder there, particularly when creating your own social media content or interacting with those who do not hunt.

#### PARTING SENTIMENTS:

Since a major June holiday is Father's Day and many members are proudly fathers, this quote seemed appropriate to share.

"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children." - John James Audubon

Audubon is widely associated with the conservation of American birds and their natural habitats. He was a hunter whose collecting of bird specimens paved the way for identification when no field guides existed and few people possessed binoculars. But the era in which he lived (the late 1700's and 1800's) was one of no regulations and consequently devastating effects on various wildlife populations. His foresight in this quote is timelessly applicable, however, as it is pertinent to this day. And one could easily argue that those who understand and subscribe to the conservation through hunting model know that the world is both given by those who properly conserved in previous generations so that we may do the same currently to ensure a sustainable future. One of the basic founding premises of the East African Professional Hunters Association, which of course eventually became APHA.

Best of luck to everyone currently hunting. May you and your clients enjoy safe, interesting and successful days afield.