

Your Voice In Europe: ROADMAP feedback for Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking

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Related document: Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking

Feedback:

This is a recommendation on the published EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking Initiative.

Conservation Force is an international non-profit conservation foundation based in the USA with offices in Europe and wildlife projects across the globe, most particularly across Africa. Conservation Force is an international NGO Observer of CITES and the IUCN. It is an Associate Member of FACE, and has been a full member of CIC and IGF for more than 20 years each. Conservation Force has extensive, first-hand experience with anti-poaching in developing countries around the world. This experience ranges from the Torghar Project in Pakistan to the CAMPFIRE Program in Zimbabwe, and has included donations of tens of millions of dollars over nearly three decades.

A great deal of wildlife, particularly elephant, rhino, and lion, would not exist but for the existence of hunting areas. Those areas exceed the area of national parks. Hunting areas are more than double the area of the national parks in Mozambique and Zambia and over five times the area of the national parks of Tanzania. Of course, it is important that those areas continue to exist and that anti-poaching continue in those areas. That occurs at three levels. First, the respective wildlife departments deploy game scouts/rangers and wardens. Second, hunting operators employ anti-poaching teams and serve as the “eyes and ears” in those areas where they operate. Third, many communities and private land owners engage community or conservancy game scouts. Generally, all three tiers are primarily funded by the regulated hunting community. Hunting revenue provides the lion’s share of backbone operating budget for wildlife authorities across Africa – which is then used for law enforcement and anti-poaching. Hunting revenue also provides a great deal of the government and local incentive to control poaching and preserve wildlife as valuable assets. For instance, just one operator in Tanzania has contributed over \$2.47 million to anti-poaching and community development in cash, vehicles, a microlight plane, and donations to villages near the Selous. This operator responded to the announcement of the 2013 Selous elephant survey results by committing to fund 100 Selous game scouts at a cost of over

\$265,000. Since 2012 this operator has contributed over \$654,000 in game scout salaries and equipment, over \$698,000 in heavy equipment for anti-poaching, over \$595,000 in Land Cruiser donations, and over \$185,000 in direct donations to villages. Similarly, the wildlife foundation connected to another operator in Tanzania has contributed almost \$1.8 million in direct community benefits from 2006 to mid-2015, and over \$1.1 million in anti-poaching and conservation activities. These are the direct contributions, over and above the revenue paid to the Wildlife Division.

The three options identified and any others should be careful not to collaterally undermine the sustainable use, particularly hunting, that has been such an essential force for the habitat, budget revenue (including anti-poaching), and national and local incentives in range nations. As pointed out in the Initiative draft, the public is already confused between poaching and regulated use. This is collateral damage from the broadcasting about trafficking.

Our point is simple and important. A substantial effort should be made in any communication or message to distinguish licensed, regulated (lawful) take and illegal, black market trade. We recommend that trafficking be emphatically and expressly distinguished from licensed/permitted use and thoroughly explained. That explanation should include how wildlife benefits from lawful trade and how trade, particularly hunting, is given special treatment under CITES because of its benefits.

Please make an effort to balance the information to avoid collateral damage. Include this in any option.

*John J. Jackson, III
President, Conservation Force*