

Silencing The Uproar



Fighting for Lions - One Year Later

presented by Joe Hosmer, Al Maki, Melissa Simpson, Matt Eckert, Andrew Bird, CC Jaeger



With **ONE MILLION** hunter-raised dollars in the piggy bank, one strategic plan to ensure the conservation of the African lion, and just one year, SCI Foundation awaits the first indications of success with its Fighting for Lions Campaign.

Anticipated in January 2014, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will announce what protection status, if any, should be assigned to the African lion under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Anti-hunting organizations have petitioned the FWS to list African lions as endangered, and through a set procedure, the government must consider the ESA petition within a limited time frame. If lions are listed as endangered, then the US market is closed to lion hunting, which would cause a cascade of problems.

An endangered listing would essentially mean a total loss of US citizen participation in lion hunt-

ing. International hunters will fill the void, but they would pay less to hunt. This means African lions would lose economic value. There would be an immediate reduction in revenue for private and government run antipoaching efforts, depredation compensation, and contributions to community development.

As a result, farmers and ranchers would no longer have any in-

centive to protect lions – they would kill lions instead to protect their animals and families. Jobs and incomes of local people associated with the hunting industry would be at risk, and at the bottom of the cascade would be the lion. Ironically, lions would suffer most from the very Act that was designed to help conserve them.

For the same reasons, stopping all lion hunting (not just from US hunters), would be devastating for lion conservation. This is the goal of anti-hunting organizations – to end all hunting everywhere – without regard to its positive benefits. They will likely try to reach this goal by proposing to up-list lions to the maximum protection status at the next Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). African lions are presently protected under CITES, but their populations are healthy enough to sustain international trade. If the maximum CITES protection status is decided for lions, many countries would

The more lions interact with humans, the more common poaching for bush meat and retaliatory killings becomes.



block their citizens from participating in international hunting and trade.

The Fighting for Lions Campaign represents the hunting community and gives a voice to those who understand the importance of hunting to lion conservation. The campaign's three approaches to conserve lions are: **1)** Population Research where needed; **2)** Conservation, which includes human-wildlife conflict and anti-poaching; and **3)** Outreach and Education. The campaign brings science to the forefront and communicates that lions are absolutely not on the brink of extinction.

In the past year, SCI Foundation has initiated or accomplished the following:

Population Research:

Census surveys and organized research are of utmost importance to ensure the FWS and CITES have the correct information to make decisions. SCI Foundation has three major lion research projects underway, all of which are designed to improve lion conservation and management.

- **Project 1:** Lion Aging Experiment. If we can visually age lions in the field to a specific year class, then we can have more control over the harvest. Harvest of old lions is generally accepted as a best practice. SCI Foundation has partnered on a long term aging study that will determine whether it is possible to age lions in field situations, as well as post-harvest, with precision.

This is currently a management need as African countries trial age-based harvest regulations. The research includes lions from Zambia, Tanzania, and South Africa.

- **Project 2:** Zambia-Wide Lion Population Census. SCI Foundation is working to build a four-way partnership with Zambia's Wildlife Management Authority, University of Zambia, and Mississippi State University. This multiple-year population census will derive the most scientifically robust estimate of lions, and include statistical precision. This is a fundamental step to quota setting in Zambia with an anticipated reopening of hunting.

- **Project 3:** Study of harvest statistics in lion range states. SCI Foundation has discovered a dis-

crepancy between African government lion harvest statistics and trade statistics reported in a CITES database. The CITES database is the best information available regarding trade in protected wildlife, including lions. Thus, it is imperative that the database is accurate. Otherwise, analyses using the database to understand lion harvest and trade are inherently flawed.

Conservation (Human-Wildlife Conflict and Anti-Poaching):

With population growth, humans and lions increasingly share the same lands, resulting in conflicts. Increasing agriculture and livestock production to feed people would replace the habitat of lions and of their prey, exacerbating the problem. The more lions interact with humans, the more common poaching for bush meat and retaliatory killings becomes. By preventing these conflicts, we can help protect African lions from illegal killings. SCI Foundation is in communication with African governments to learn how we can alleviate human-wildlife conflict.



Dr. Paula White conducting lion x-rays for an on-going field aging study

Poaching and illegal trafficking of wildlife products has soared in the past few years, particularly of rhinos and elephants. Rhinoceros horn has become a lucrative black market commodity in East Asia, pound for pound more valuable than gold, and has been linked to funding terrorists. As a result, a global effort is now in effect to combat poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking. Within this arena, SCI Foundation has worked on the following items:

- **On July 1, 2013**, President Obama signed an executive order establishing a Presidential Taskforce on Combatting Wildlife Trafficking. The administration has taken a strong step to combat the growing problem of poaching and illegal wildlife trade. The Taskforce will coordinate efforts among federal agencies and work with foreign nations to aid in enforcement against crime related to wildlife trafficking and poaching.





Anti-poaching efforts will benefit African wildlife including the lion. To the best of our ability, SCI Foundation will be involved with the development of recommendations that are implemented by the task force.

- **During the African Wildlife Consultative Forum (AWCF)**, hosted by Zambia and SCI Foundation in Livingstone, Zambia, November of 2013, three letters were drafted:

The first letter was to Director Ashe of the FWS asking for his consideration of the African nations represented at AWCF before making any decisions regarding the listing of the African Lion under the Endangered Species Act. All nations represented signed on.

The second letter detailed the importance of the African government's intelligence to the development of strategy with wildlife

trafficking and anti-poaching. All nations represented signed on and the letter has since been submitted to the record.

The third letter was drafted by the PH Association representatives and expressed their interest to be involved, however possible, with anti-poaching efforts initiated by the Taskforce. Every single PH Association signed onto the letter giving a strong "boots-on-the ground" voice that hunting in Africa is essential to combatting wildlife trafficking. SCI Foundation acted on the 13 PH associations' behalf and submitted the letter for record.

Outreach and Education:

Public opinion impacts regulatory decisions. SCI Foundation has completed public opinion surveys to help explain the impacts of an ESA listing and CITES uplisting to decision makers. Both regulatory mechanisms can have a great influence on hunters investing in the conservation of the African lion. Just like in the US, hunting generates conservation revenue in Africa. An Endangered status or





uplifting for the African lion will result in major revenue losses for conservation and less protection for African lions in Zambia, Tanzania, and South Africa, among others. SCIF's accomplishments include:

- **In early 2013**, SCI Foundation conducted extensive public research to properly frame the argument that would prevent an endangered listing under the ESA. Further, SCI Foundation partnered with some of the foremost experts in Washington when it comes to the intricacies of the Endangered Species Act. These experts advised SCI Foundation for the best

course of action moving forward through 2014 and beyond.

- **In June of 2013**, SCI Foundation participated in an exclusive lion workshop hosted by the FWS. SCI Foundation Conservation Chair Dr. Al Maki outlined current conservation efforts across the lion's range and focused on Tanzania's successful management of the species. All participating biologists were in agreement that the African Lion was NOT "on the brink of extinction."

- **Also in June**, SCI Foundation released "Keeping the Lion's Share,"

which counters a "study" issued by the petitioning groups questioning the role of hunters in helping African communities. The "study" aims to belittle the socioeconomic contributions of hunters. Keeping the Lion's Share points to figures that show how millions of dollars contributed by hunters to African communities dwarf the paltry expenditures by the animal rights groups in sub-Saharan Africa. The report was published by many mainstream media outlets such as The Wall Street Journal, Yahoo News and CNBC.

The first real-world measure for the effectiveness of the Fighting for Lions Campaign starts with the Endangered Species Act. SCI Foundation's efforts with outreach and communication of lion science will be successful if the African lion is not listed as an endangered species. Future measures include CITES recommendations on how lions should be listed by CITES, ground breaking research being used in lion management, and public awareness of the benefits hunting has to lion conservation.

SCI Foundation is working to inform the public and policy makers about on-the-ground wildlife initiatives occurring in Africa.

Lions In The Press



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JUNE 26, 2013

Scientists Tell U.S.FWS African Lion Is Not Endangered

Washington, DC – Today, experts on the status of the African lion explained to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) that the African lion is not on the brink of extinction. Their testimony contradicts the claims in a petition filed by several anti-rights groups asking the service to list the African lion as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Safari Club International Foundation (SCI Foundation) participated in an exclusive workshop

OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

Saving Lions by Killing Them

By ALEXANDER N. SONGORWA

Published: March 17, 2013

DAR ES SALAAM, [Tanzania](#)

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ODD as it may sound, American trophy hunters play a critical role in protecting wildlife in Tanzania. The millions of dollars that hunters spend to go on safari here each year help finance the game reserves, wildlife management areas and conservation efforts in our rapidly growing country.

This is why we are alarmed that the United States [Fish and Wildlife Service](#) is considering listing the African lion

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Animal "protection" groups doing little to protect African lions

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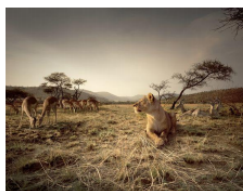
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Washington, D.C. – Safari Club International Foundation (SCI Foundation) exposed the hypocrisy of four animal rights groups in a new report released today. The report, "Keeping the Lion's Share" counters a "study" issued last week questioning the role of hunters in helping African communities, and calling for African lions to be listed by the

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC Daily News

Opinion: African Lions Should Not Be Listed as Endangered

Responsible hunters bring in money for conservation efforts.



A lioness ignores her prey at sunset on the plains lion hunting support conservation?

Photograph by Darran Rees/Corbis

Melissa Simpson for [National Geographic](#)
Published September 2, 2013

Editor's note: Melissa Simpson is the director of science conservation for the [Safari Club International Foundation](#)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering a petition from several animal rights groups to list the African lion on the list of endangered species. By law, species are to be placed on that list if the Fish and Wildlife Service determines that they are currently "in danger of extinction." In an support for the petition, a proponent claimed recently that the lion is "in danger of disappearing."

(Related: "[Opinion: Why Are We Still Hunting Lions?](#)")

Is the condition of the lion really that dire? Fortunately, the most recent scientific data say no. A [study](#) published last December concluded that there are between 32,000 and 35,000 lions living in the lion population is spread across 27 countries, with nine countries having populations of at least 10,000. ("The Serengeti Lion.")

Of greatest significance is the fact that 24,000 of the lions, which is at least 68 percent of the total, live in "strongholds." Strongholds are areas that meet "the necessary requirements for viability" of their lion populations.

To qualify as a stronghold, an area must meet these three criteria:

- 1) a population of at least 500 lions;
- 2) be legally protected as lion habitat, or be an area where hunting is managed; and
- 3) contain a population of lions whose numbers are either stable or increasing.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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Animal "Protection" Groups Doing Little to Protect African Lions, Says SCI Foundation

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New Report Shows How Animal Rights Hypocrites Keep Lion's Share of Donations and Stiff African Communities

WASHINGTON, June 2, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Safari Club International Foundation (SCI Foundation) exposed the hypocrisy of four animal rights groups in a new report released today. The report, "Keeping the Lion's Share" counters a "study" issued last week questioning the role of hunters in helping African communities, and calling for African lions to be listed by the U.S. government as an endangered species. The report points to figures that show the millions of dollars contributed by hunters to African communities dwarf the paltry expenditures by the animal rights groups in sub-Saharan Africa.

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