

April 7, 2014



The Honorable Daniel Ashe
Director, United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Suspension of Import of Elephant Trophies from Tanzania and Zimbabwe

Dear Director Ashe:

On behalf of Safari Club International and millions of conservationists worldwide, we were shocked at your decision on Friday, April 4, 2014 to unilaterally ban the importation of sport-hunted elephants from Zimbabwe and Tanzania. This decision in and of itself shows a fundamental abandonment of the stated goal of “scientific excellence” for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service’s (FWS) because this announcement relied solely on anecdotal evidence to make a rash decision with no basis in law, science, or conservation policy. We respectfully request that the FWS rescind its decision banning 2014 sport-hunted elephant trophy imports from Zimbabwe and Tanzania. In order to increase the quality of the information that FWS is relying upon, we also request your personal attendance at the 2014 African Wildlife Consultative Forum which will be held outside Addis Ababa, Ethiopia November 3-7.

The FWS’s decision appears to have been made without any consultation of the affected African nations. The FWS decision will do nothing to prevent poaching in Africa. If anything, removing the U.S. hunter from the landscape of Africa’s great outdoors will permanently handicap government bodies and communal wildlife administrators in their fight against poachers. Problems with poaching in either Zimbabwe or Tanzania will be exacerbated by this ill-advised ban by the FWS.

International hunters are the first line of defense for conservation, management, and anti-poaching throughout Africa. When wildlife has no value, hundreds of years of history prove that it will most certainly be slaughtered indiscriminately. In 2003, sport hunting accounted for approximately 60-90% of all revenues for Zimbabwe’s Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management. SCI’s members have purchased bull elephant tags to benefit the CAMPFIRE Foundation in Zimbabwe who conduct anti-poaching work throughout the communal lands of their country. SCI’s members have paid more than \$100,000 to support elephant conservation through these tags from 2012-2014, whereas the FWS has spent only \$56,000 to protect Zimbabwe’s elephants from 2011-2013 through the Multinational Species Conservation Grants.

The role of international hunters has an incredible impact on the ability of Tanzania to manage its wildlife and conduct anti-poaching activities. For example, Tanzania has 157 hunting

blocks that cover 30% of Tanzania's total land area representing 70 million acres that are managed by private hunting operations. Furthermore, sport hunting employs approximately 3,700 people and supports over 88,000 families in Tanzania. A U.S. policy decision that disproportionately impacts Tanzania's population and its rural economies should not be taken without consultation with the affected government.

The unilateral decision by FWS on Friday, April 4, 2014 will effectively defund conservation efforts across thousands of communities in Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Again, we respectfully request that the FWS rescind its decision banning 2014 sport-hunted elephant trophy imports from Zimbabwe and Tanzania. We respectfully suggest that FWS also undertake measures to improve the quality of data upon which it relies, and toward that goal we also request your personal attendance at the 2014 African Wildlife Consultative Forum which will be held outside Addis Ababa, Ethiopia November 3-7.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig L. Kauffman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Craig Kauffman
President, Safari Club International