

by Gerhard Damm

# News From And About Africa

## **Africa - Conservation Force (USA)**

Conservation Force created a new Chart summarizing community revenue sharing benefits from regulated hunting in Africa. The Chart will be updated annually.

It thoroughly refutes the circulating misrepresentations that communities get little benefit from safari hunting. Conservation Force has also issued educational materials to refute the false and malicious information. Conservation Force campaigns to clarify the difference between licensed, regulated hunting and poaching to educate legislators, media, and others.

In October 2015, Conservation Force sued Delta Air Lines for its unlawful embargo on transport of hunting trophies. Delta moved to dismiss the complaint at the end of December 2015. The motion was fully briefed in the 1st quarter 2016, and now it is on the court to decide. Contact Conservation Force for details at [jjj@conservationforce.org](mailto:jjj@conservationforce.org)

## **Congo DR**

Two park rangers were captured by rebels “before being summarily executed” in Virunga National Park in an attack which is believed representing a new coalition of Mai Mai rebels specifically targeting Virunga’s rangers. Virunga NP is a 7,800-square-kilometer UNESCO world heritage site, which borders Rwanda and Uganda. A third ranger is missing. In a counter attack armed forces killed five rebels. A total of 150 rangers have now been killed in the past decade in Virunga said the park’s director Emmanuel de Merode.

## **DR Congo - Switzerland**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), supported by partners including the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), has published the first-ever coordinated global strategy to protect the unique and elusive okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*) from extinction in the wild. The 10-year strategy, guided by a detailed review of the species’ status through a range-wide, multi-partner conservation effort, calls for urgent government and international commitment to support the integrity of key Congolese protected areas from armed militia and illegal extractives activities. Read more [HERE](#)

## **DR Congo**

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) announced that park ranger Oscar Mianziro was fatally shot in Kahuzi-Biega National Park in eastern Congo. The park guard was killed while investigating a truck that had been looted and left on the side of a park road. WCS supports efforts to protect Grauer’s gorillas in Kahuzi-Biega.

## **Kenya**

Community conservation efforts in northern Kenya are bringing back the world’s most threatened antelope from the edge of extinction. Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) reports that numbers of Critically Endangered Hirola (*Beatragus hunteri*) in the Ishaqbini Hirola Sanctuary, Kenya have doubled

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in just 3 and-a-half years. Read more [HERE](#)

### **South Africa**

The Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Unit, a South African ranger group operating in the Balule Private Game Reserve consisting mostly of women has been named as one of the winners of the Champions of the Earth award, a top United Nations environmental prize. “Community-led initiatives are crucial to combatting the illegal wildlife trade and the Black Mambas highlight the importance and effectiveness of local knowledge and commitment,” said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner. (Source: UN News Centre)

### **Tanzania**

A Dar-es-Salaam court sentenced two Chinese poachers to 30 years for illegally possessing 706 elephant tusks. Xu Fujie and Huang Gin had the option to pay \$24.6 million each to avoid the jail term. They had collected the ivory loot from their accomplices, who brought it from Mtwara, Lindi and Ruvuma regions. Members of the public became suspicious of vehicles coming in and out of a yard at Biafra one of the criminal hotspots of Dar. A day before the two were sentenced, a Manyara court sentenced 3 poachers to 20 years each and Rebecca Julius was sentenced to 25 years by a Serengeti court. She was arrested with four pieces of elephant tusks. On March 7, eight poachers were jailed for 20 years each. Two of the convicts were policemen (Source: The Citizen Tanzania)

### **Zambia**

President Lungu has expressed concern about the high levels of poaching and has directed all security agencies in Zambia to stop wildlife crimes. The Head of State said there is need to protect animals as they contribute effectively to the growth of the country’s tourism sector. Mr Lungu also said “those that may be planning to venture into poaching or planning to illegally settle in any of our protected areas should refrain as [we] will deal with them sternly”. Government is also pleased that the annual revenue of about K7 million to K12 million is raised [from] trophy hunting of elephant alone and that wildlife-based tourism creates about 10 percent of jobs in Zambia, mostly for the remotely located rural communities who depend on the wildlife industry for employment (Source Daily Mail)

### **Zimbabwe**

On January 21, 2016, Zimbabwe’s Minister and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Water, Climate, and Environment and the Director-General of ZimParks signed the National Elephant Action Plan. The plan replaced Zimbabwe’s 19-year old plan, which was a primary cause of the USF&WS elephant import suspension. This is the culmination of two years of hard work of Conservation Force and its allies. Now Zimbabwe has the most up to-date elephant action plan in Africa, including 4 regional plans. Conservation Force introduced a new program providing rewards for information leading to the conviction of poachers. Conservation Force also helped fund the hiring of Zimbabwe’s first National Elephant Coordinator. A New USF&WS finding enhancement on Zimbabwe’s elephant is pending.

### **Zimbabwe**

Claudio Chiarelli and his son Max Chiarelli died instantly when caught in the mistaken fire of a National Parks patrol of three rangers at about 3.30 pm on Sunday 13th March. Claudio and Max, together with Francesco Marconati were providing voluntary support to deploy two National Parks anti-poaching

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patrols consisting of 6 rangers with the intention of uplifting the three rangers who were in the field following fresh spoor of poachers. The group had parked their vehicle on the side of the road in the middle section of the Mana Pools National Park to await the arrival of the three Park rangers who had been tracking poachers in dense bush since 9.00 am that morning. The intention was to meet at the road and hand over three fresh rangers to continue the follow-up.

Claudio and Max Chiarelli with Francesco Marconati took the opportunity to open the bonnet of their vehicle to inspect the engine. Meanwhile, the six park rangers they were transporting had dismounted from the vehicle and arranged themselves next to it while waiting for their three colleagues to arrive. Unbeknown to them, the vehicle had been parked within just 15 meters of where the poachers' tracks had crossed the road. Meanwhile, the anti-poaching patrol in hot pursuit, heard voices, crouched down, and slowly moved forward through the thick undergrowth. Through a gap in the bushes, they saw part of a blue shirt. They assumed this was a poacher and let off a burst of gunfire. Tragically, both Claudio and Max were killed instantly. As the anti-poaching patrol rangers were crouched, they were unable to see the road at all. Fortunately, the six rangers awaiting deployment did not return fire.

Richard Maasdorp, Strategic Director of The Zambezi Society stated: "Today (Monday 14th March 2016), we witnessed a thorough on-site investigation by the Zimbabwe Police CID and members of the National Parks Investigations Branch and Senior Management. The Zimbabwe Parks & Wildlife Management Authority and other state organs now, more than ever, need support and resources to contain their battle against wildlife poaching. We, the Zambezi Society, extend our very deepest sympathy to Mrs. Chiarelli and her daughter and the family on this terrible tragedy. We posthumously thank Claudio and Max Chiarelli, as a father and son combination, for the years of dedication that they have shown in support of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe. This tragedy is deeply regretted." E-mail the Zambezi Society at [zambezi@iwayafrica.co.zw](mailto:zambezi@iwayafrica.co.zw)