

Protecting Our Wildlife

Animals Help Make The Outdoors Great

by Eugene Lapointe

(NAPSA)—I am a conservationist because I love wildlife. I don't want to see any species become extinct through man-made neglect. I have spent my life working to protect animals like elephants and whales. I support those groups that invest in improving the welfare of animals abused by mankind.

I also recognize cultural differences. It is a tradition for many people in the country to hunt abundant deer, doves and other wildlife, just as in big cities it is traditional to patronize the arts.

I have never liked people who try to sell pyramid schemes. I don't like to see people conned by fund-raising scams. I also have a strong affinity toward truth.

So what I and others in my organization promote is the conservation of habitat and wildlife resources. We advocate the use of science-based wildlife management techniques. And we wish to see the humane, ethical and fair treatment of all people whose customs and traditions involve the sustainable use of wildlife resources.

IWMC World Conservation Trust believes that understanding and respect for distinctive cultural practices relating to the management of wildlife resources is as important today as the need for science-based conservation of all natural resources for future generations.

And here's why. Take the whale. Of the 75 types of marine cetacean (whales, dolphins, porpoise), only five of the great whale species are now endangered. That's great news! Most at risk today is the right whale, and the major obstacle to its continued survival is accidental collisions with ships or entanglement in fishing nets.

Unfortunately, if you turn on the TV, you get a different picture. All whales seem to be endangered by hunters from other countries. Surf the Internet and you are urged to give money to a plethora of groups who pledge to save the whale. And the fund-raising is aimed at children and young adults.

In fact, countries like Japan only hunt small numbers of common whale species and they do so as part of a long cultural tradition. Stunts filmed by campaign groups and sent by satellite to



Conservation efforts should focus on species that are truly endangered.

news organizations give a false picture of Davids fighting the unconscionable Goliath. They want our money, just like the guy trying to persuade us to enter a pyramid scheme.

Our ecosystem is a delicate balance between predators and prey. We can protect species, often in ingenious ways. In the 1980s, the governments of South Africa and Zimbabwe carefully managed hunting of African elephants. Their protection programs were so successful that culling was necessary to keep the population under control. Revenue from the culling was used to finance and sustain the protection program itself.

Unfortunately, man is not always so wise. In the case of the elephants, images of illegal hunting in Kenya and Tanzania persuaded the international community to ban all sales of ivory. This had little impact on the illegal traders but halted the successful sustainable approach.

You don't often find true conservationists being filmed for stunts. And the person trying to get you in on a pyramid scheme isn't really your best friend. To find out more about real conservation please visit our Web site at www.iwmc.org. Winning your attention and moral support is more important to us than receiving your checks.

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