Weakening of wildlife protections signals trophy hunting ban crucial to saving Africa’s Big 5

By PRISCILLA FERAL
SPECIAL TO HARTFORD COURANT  |  OCT 06, 2019  |  6:00 AM

The recent decisions by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service granting permits to hunters to bring trophies of lions and rhinos back to the country and the Trump administration’s weakening of the Endangered Species Act, which puts threatened animals in peril, as...
The population of elephants has declined by 90 percent in the past century, with losses attributed to the commodification of elephants for their ivory, and skin. This is in addition to the challenges they face from habitat destruction and climate change. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has elevated the threat level of giraffes to “vulnerable to extinction,” estimating that giraffes have undergone a 36-40 percent decline in population over the past 30 years. Only about 97,500 giraffes remain in Africa, compared to more than 150,000 in 1985. Additionally, there are fewer than 23,000 lions left in Africa, according to a recent study by the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit at Oxford.

Yet Botswana has reversed a ban on elephant hunting, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) at its most recent convention has doubled the amount of South Africa’s black rhinos that can be hunted.

[Opinion] Fresh Talk: Universities must get creative in solving the student suicide epidemic »

Add to this the loosening of restrictions by Trump’s Department of Interior on trophy imports, and the survival of these species looks bleak. Just recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorized a permit for a U.S. trophy hunter to import the skin, skull, teeth and claws of a Tanzanian lion — the first permit issued since lions gained protections under the ESA. The agency also granted a Michigan man a permit to import the skin, skull and horns of a rare black rhino — which IUCN has listed as critically endangered — killed in Namibia on a $400,000 hunting safari.

Yet, Connecticut continues to allow trophy hunters to bring these body parts back to this state, for no other purpose but to show off as stuffed remnants of a struggling species.
Trophy hunters, the majority of whom come from the U.S., like to peddle the theory that they are saving species by killing them and that without the big bucks they spend on hunting safaris in Africa, there'd be no money to protect these species from poachers or for other conservation efforts. This argument is fundamentally flawed in that trophy hunting in itself creates a market for elephants, lions, leopards, rhinos and giraffes, thus spurring poachers to engage in the illegal trade of their body parts.

The funding argument also falls short because studies show less than 3 percent of revenue from hunting safaris ever gets through corruption to flow back to African communities. In fact, just this month, the Zambia Community Resource Boards withdrew their signatures to all hunting permits and pledged to stop all future trophy hunting because they said their communities have not been given their share of hunting revenues and fees, and their anti-poaching staff members had not been paid their salaries.

What’s necessary is a ban on all imports of African trophies to U.S. ports. Federal legislation to ban trophies passed a key U.S. House of Representatives Committee. And a state bill co-sponsored by Connecticut Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff in Connecticut that would ban the import of body parts of the Big 5 passed the Senate in the spring, and then stalled in the House of Representatives when it wasn’t put on the calendar for a vote by leadership.

With the federal government weakening its stance on protecting these species from extinction, it’s urgent that states lead the charge to end the slaying of endangered and threatened animals in the bogus name of conservation. Connecticut has a chance to be a role model. Let’s not allow another session to go by without the passage of this historic legislation.
Priscilla Feral, president of Friends of Animals, has presided over the international, non-profit animal advocacy organization since 1987.

People Who Retire Comfortably Avoid These Financial Advisor Mistakes
SmartAsset

How To Entirely Empty Your Bowels Every Morning - Top Yale Surgeon Explains How
Gundry MD | Supplement

Connecticut Drivers With No Tickets in 3 Years Should Do This On ...
EverQuote Insurance Quotes

Connecticut Brings No Cost Solar to Darien
Solar Energy Quotes

This Amazon Upgrade is Even Better Than Prime
Honey

Ralph making the most of motherhood
Shea Ralph is at practice, standing under the basket. She's wearing a baby carrier and her 8-month-old daughter Maysen is peering out, studying the UConn women's basketball players ...
The Courant

Models don eye-popping looks in tape-only swimsuit show
NY Daily News

Affordable All-Inclusive Vacations That Are Simply Astonishing!
All-Inclusive Vacations | Search Ads

One Thing All Liars Have in Common, Brace Yourself
TruthFinder People Search Subscription

Body found on Route 2 exit ramp in East Hartford believed to be a …
Connecticut State Police Trooper Josue Dorelus describes what officials saw when they arrived on scene at Route 2 in East Hartford.
The Courant

Fotis Dulos' lawyer speaks after court reveals Dulos' DNA was found mixed with his wife's blood
The Courant

You May Like

What are 9 common types of ancestors in family trees?
Ancestry

Wells Fargo $400 Welcome Bonus Offer. Learn More
Wells Fargo - Member FDIC

Darien, Connecticut Drivers Fuming Over New Rule
Drive Finance Insurance Quotes

What happens to all 2019 unsold ca...
SUVs | Search Ads

Most Read on Hartford Courant

1. UConn women: Evina Westbrook's waiver status still up in the air as she recovers from offseason knee injury

2. Hartford's $26M Park and Main redevelopment to have more rentals, later groundbreaking
News @ 3 Newsletter - Hartford Courant

Daily

Catch up on Hartford's top headlines sent directly to your inbox weekdays at 3 p.m.

SUBSCRIBE

The Office! a musical parody

BUY NOW

NOVEMBER 1-2

---

Sign up for our newsletters

Subscribe for unlimited access

Classifieds
Place an Ad
Contact Us
Terms of Service
TAG disclosure

About Our Ads
Local print ads
BestReviews
Privacy Policy
About Us

Copyright © 2019, Hartford Courant