



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation

22 November 2017

Mr. Donald J. Trump, President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20006

RE: Conservation of African Elephants in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and other African countries

President Trump,

The conservation of threatened and endangered species is one of the most formidable challenges facing professional wildlife managers. Conservation of these species requires biological expertise and effective engagement of stakeholders. The Wildlife Society supports cooperative programs, both nationally and internationally, that are designed to manage and conserve threatened and endangered populations.

(Threatened & Endangered Species Standing Position)

The Wildlife Society also believes that human-wildlife interactions should enhance the overall value of wildlife resources—creating incentives to conserve and perpetuate wildlife through enhanced economic, cultural, and social importance *(Responsible Human Use of Wildlife Standing Position)*. Hunting and other means of harvest, when based on biological principles and properly regulated, has clearly been shown to enhance wildlife conservation efforts and be an appropriate human use of wildlife. *(Hunting Standing Position)*

Importation to the U.S. of hunter-harvested African elephants is permitted under the U.S. Endangered Species Act's Section 4(d) rule, where such activities are determined to enhance the survival of the population; such imports are currently permitted from Namibia and South Africa. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has undertaken a rigorous review of the African elephant management plans for Zambia and Zimbabwe and has determined these plans, and their restrictive harvest components, will enhance conservation efforts for those populations.

The Wildlife Society supports sustainable harvest of wildlife and the concept that such hunting in Africa can be a source of funding that otherwise would not be available for local conservation efforts. Fees paid by foreign hunters provide funding that can create incentives for local communities to maintain large and potentially dangerous wildlife on the landscape, rather than kill them as pests, and retain their habitats, rather than convert them to agriculture or pasture. Hunter-generated funds are used to help resolve local human-wildlife conflicts, support anti-poaching and wildlife trafficking efforts, and secure tracts of suitable habitat.

We support and applaud the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's science-based process for evaluating African elephant management plans, and for determining that any harvest components will contribute to the survival of the species. Given the apparent political transition underway in Zimbabwe, we recommend the Service determine if the plans it has already reviewed for Zimbabwe are supported by the country's new leadership before a final decision is rendered regarding elephant imports from that country. We encourage your administration to advance science-based policies that will conserve and enhance African elephant populations and support sustainable use of wildlife resources.

Sincerely,

Dr. John E. McDonald, Jr.
President

Cc: Ryan Zinke, David Bernhardt, Greg Sheehan, Jim Kurth, Steve Guertin

The Wildlife Society, founded in 1937, represents more than 10,000 professional wildlife biologists and managers dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation.