

August 26, 2015

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VIA EMAIL: [acwtmeeting@fws.gov](mailto:acwtmeeting@fws.gov)

Re: Supplemental Written Statement - Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking Public Meeting August 24, 2015

Knife Rights represents America's millions of knife owners, knifemakers, scrimshaw artists, knife retailers and suppliers to knifemakers and scrimshaw artists, many of whom own legally acquired decades-old ivory or knives with decades-old ivory components, as well as many other decades-old lawfully owned ivory items, just like millions of other Americans.

Knife Rights and our members abhor poaching of all species and support science-based conservation efforts that have succeeded in posting significant GAINS in some elephant populations in recent years. We support practical efforts to defend elephants in the field that have resulted in MARKED DECLINES IN POACHING in recent years, as well as lawful enforcement activities that directly target illegal black-market trade in ivory. We support targeting poachers, not abusing law-abiding Americans.

Following recommendations by this Council, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has published its politically motivated proposed Ivory Ban rule that is virtually guaranteed to fail in its supposed goal of reducing poaching of African Elephants. It is an ill-advised and highly discriminatory radical social engineering experiment that is being perpetrated on honest Americans. It is an offense to American values of fairness and constitutional protections.

This Council and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service persist in this disingenuous and misguided strategy, despite it being justified by intentional distortion of numerous expert studies and internationally accepted data. The author of one of those studies, Dr. Daniel Stiles, one of the world's leading experts in this field, just last week filed a comment that was a stinging rebuke to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service regarding the perversion of his study in furtherance of this illegitimate policy and proposed rule: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=FWS-HQ-IA-2013-0091-0415>

Additionally, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) study, "Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) UPDATE ON ELEPHANT POACHING TRENDS IN AFRICA TO 31 DECEMBER 2014" evaluates relative poaching levels based on the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE). The latest report shows a chart of illegal killing of elephants peaking in 2011 and declining and leveling off thereafter. The report also shows Eastern Africa numbers have dropped for the last 4 years and are now at sustainable levels as it has been sustainable in Southern Africa for all the years monitored 2002 -2014. Where they protect the herds in Africa, the herds are proven to be sustainable. This full report can be found at [cites.org/sites/default/files/i/news/2015/WWD-PR-Annex\\_MIKE\\_trend\\_update\\_2014\\_new.pdf](http://cites.org/sites/default/files/i/news/2015/WWD-PR-Annex_MIKE_trend_update_2014_new.pdf)

There has never been any data or real world experience to support the Ivory Ban that is being proposed, yet millions of Americans will be economically harmed and disadvantaged to no good end. Applying simple common sense tests to this issue clearly exposes this entire effort as being the political charade it really is.

This absurd strategy unjustly persecutes honest ivory owners who find their lawful investment in legally acquired decades-old ivory "taken" by government edict and made worthless in violation of the 5th Amendment, their livelihood stolen from them in some cases. They now find themselves not only treated as criminals, but also without any onus on the government to prove illicit activity. Rather, they must prove their innocence, an affront to America's longstanding legal principles and protections of its citizen's rights.

This Council's recommendations, and therefore the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Council's proposed rule, are arbitrary and ill-advised. If the ivory ban effort is indicative of the Council's efforts going forward, than its continued failure to address the real world issues involved in ending illegal trafficking head-on doom these efforts to failure even as they increasingly harm American citizens and do nothing to stop illegal trafficking.

We call upon the Council to cease their attempts to address wildlife trafficking by relying on strategies that are not science-based and that only punish law-abiding Americans. We believe the Council should always consider the unjustified adverse impact of such strategies on American citizens.

This Ivory Ban will not save a single living elephant. This Administration should not unjustly harm American lawful ivory owners for others' illegal and immoral activities that continue to threaten elephants, and which this ivory ban does nothing to ameliorate.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DSR', written in a cursive style.

Douglas S. Ritter  
Chairman