



# HUNTER ADVOCACY

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPORT



## *SCI IN ACTION*

- On Capitol Hill
- In State Capitals
- In Court
- Around the World

Winter's Field Notes  
January - March, 2023



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*A Message from CEO W. Laird Hamberlin and  
EVP of International Government & Public Affairs Benjamin Cassidy*

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As Spring emerges, we look back on SCI's advocacy work at the international, federal, state and legal levels. This report captures our biggest accomplishments from January through March 2023 as well as highlights our ongoing efforts.

In February, we celebrated 51 years of defending the freedom to hunt and promoting wildlife conservation worldwide at our annual Convention. For the first time, the Ultimate Sportsmen's Market moved to Nashville, Tennessee and achieved record-breaking success. Every day and night featured the best outfitters, seminars, entertainment, auctions. It truly delivered the best of what the hunting and conservation industry has to offer. Whether it was the numbers of attendees, exhibitors, countries represented, or dollars raised, this Convention was **record-breaking by every metric**.

We extend a huge thank you to all exhibitors, donors, entertainment, award winners, and of course, attendees, for making this possible. In addition to providing the market for world-class exhibitors and sportsmen and women, the annual SCI Convention is critically important as it funds our advocacy efforts. SCI's advocacy team works every day at the local, state, federal, and international levels to protect your freedom to hunt around the world.

This update dives into the successes of convention but, more importantly, highlights the work made possible by our members. From pushing back against federal government overreach, to expanding our team in Europe, to opposing trophy bans, to being present in more places than ever before, SCI continues to be First for Hunters. The executive summary below gives the highlights, but you don't want to miss the details in the full update!

Now, we are already planning our next convention, which will be held back in Nashville from January 31st until February 3rd, 2024. Our theme for next year is The Future of Hunting, capturing the critical role that every SCI member plays in determining what experiences the next generations will experience. Thank you for supporting our mission as we stand First for Hunters.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. Laird Hamberlin".

W. Laird Hamberlin  
CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "BJ Cassidy".

Benjamin J. Cassidy  
EVP of International,  
Government & Public Affairs

## ANNUAL CONVENTION

The energy around SCI's 2023 convention lived up to what Forbes Magazine called the "Super Bowl for the hunting world." Thanks to the dedication of SCI volunteers, staff, world-class exhibitors, loyal members, and MANY new members, SCI's 51st Annual Convention broke all records! More people walked the exhibit hall, auction fundraising was unprecedented and sell-outs spanned every evening event and the Hunter Action Fund Luncheon & Auction. Dignitaries from around the world addressed and mingled with SCI members, including foreign legislators, ministers of natural resources and ambassadors, governors, representatives and senators from numerous states and the US Congress, plus sports and entertainment celebrities. Nashville, Tennessee proved the premier venue for the Ultimate Sportsmen's Market.

## ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

This past quarter SCI fought for a variety of hunting access issues and opportunities. In court, we fought to protect bear baiting on national forests out West. We supported an increase in hunting access in Maryland and Sunday hunting in Connecticut, while opposing efforts to ban hunting competitions in Nevada. In Australia, SCI is opposing waterfowl hunting closures. We continue engaging hunters across the U.S. to petition the Biden Administration to maintain nationwide access.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT LISTINGS

Responding to anti-hunting petitions, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) is conducting a status review to determine whether to list hippos under the Endangered Species Act and whether to increase import restrictions on leopards. SCI continues engaging FWS and working with stakeholders across the world to counter anti-hunting claims with the facts. We stand ready to fight in court.

## EVERYWHERE WE NEED TO BE

SCI leads on the issues effecting hunters by travelling where the debate is happening. The SCI advocacy team and executives traveled to five states this quarter to attend events with legislators and leaders of sportsmen's caucuses, sportsmen's events, wildlife and conservation association conferences, and SCI chapter functions.

## FEDERAL OVERREACH

Gross federal overreach continues to malign Alaska. The Administration is preempting state hunting regulations on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, reinstating unnecessary restrictions on 20 million acres of National Preserves, and implementing hunting closures for all but subsistence hunters. Whether in the courtroom, by submitting oral and written arguments or through letters from hunters through the Hunter Advocacy Action Center (HAAC), SCI is supporting Alaska's right to manage its resources.

## FIREARMS

SCI efforts in Canada proved effective in removing amendments to ban common hunting firearms. SCI continues challenging gun-control laws in California and Oregon that impact hunting, hunter education and the ability of SCI chapters and other organizations to raise funds or support youth hunting.

## FRIENDS IN CONGRESS

SCI celebrates legislators who show unwavering support for hunting and the critical role it plays in conservation. SCI recognized Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith with the Federal Legislator of the Year award at the 2023 convention in Nashville, Tennessee. We also thank House Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman for holding hearings on bills directing government to trust and allow science to dictate wildlife management decisions, especially when it comes to the Endangered Species Act.

## GROWING THE TEAM

Two key additions to the team have increased SCI's impact around the world. European Liaison Juan Magaz van Nes is based in the heart of the European Union where he advocates for sustainable use conservation, and former Wyoming Game and Fish Director Scott Talbott serves as Guides and Outfitters Liaison, connecting and coordinating SCI's advocacy mission with hunting professionals around the world.



## HUNTER EDUCATION AND YOUTH HUNTING

SCI submitted comments supporting a bill to allow hunter education in schools for the benefit of hunter recruitment and conservation funding. We also supported regulation changes benefiting youth hunters in Nevada.

## INTERNATIONAL FOOTPRINT

The 140 countries represented at SCI's 51st Annual Convention reflects our unique global footprint, and the recently announced strategic alliance with one of the largest hunting fairs in Europe is another step in growing our international influence in support of hunting around the globe.

## PREDATOR MANAGEMENT - BEARS, MOUNTAIN LIONS, WOLVES

SCI hosted a state wildlife directors forum on bear management issues and conflicts, attended a bear management caucus meeting and weighed in on proposed management policies for wolf, bears and mountain lions in eight states. SCI members also sent HAAC alerts to supporting science-based predator management in their respective states.



SCI CEO W. Laird Hamberlin and the Cinegética President Marcos Quintas signing the first transatlantic declaration of intention of fairs for hunting.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA

SCI's YouTube channel hit 1.3 million views this quarter, and the First for Hunters Podcast is posting bi-weekly episodes featuring exclusive interviews and news updates. SCI social media influence continues to grow and we continue to stand up to Big Tech's attempts to censor our hunting lifestyle. We helped rally support for reinstating Senator Steve Daines' Twitter account after it was suspended for a post of him and his wife with their pronghorn.

## RIGHT TO HUNT

A number of states are turning to right to hunt amendments to their constitutions as a way to safeguard hunting. SCI has supported right to hunt constitutional amendments in Florida and Montana so far this year.

## SCI ONLINE STORE

SCI's online store continues adding the brands and products that SCI members are proud to wear. Convention was the perfect testing ground, and merchandise flew off the shelves.

## TROPHY IMPORT BANS & PERMITS

SCI defended the issuance of individual permits for sport-hunted leopards from three countries. Additionally, we worked with range states, indigenous communities, community partners and hunters to inundate the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with extensive information showing their proposed restriction on African elephant importations is bad for conservation. HAAC comments from hunters were sent on the FWS proposal and on the New York trophy import ban being considered by the state's legislature once again. In the UK, SCI is urging the House of Lords to listen to experts and science instead of emotion when voting as a trophy ban is debated.

## WATERFOWL AND WETLAND CONSERVATION

SCI supported proposed new regulations to open hunting for tundra swan in Maryland and joined a coalition of conservation organizations in petitioning government funding for wetland restoration and conservation in Michigan



# Annual Convention

*The Ultimate Sportsmen's Market*

Safari Club International hosted its 2023 annual convention, celebrating 51 years of protecting the freedom to hunt and promoting wildlife conservation worldwide. Whether it was the number of attendees who passed through the doors, the money raised to defend the freedom to hunt and promote conservation worldwide, the 853 exhibitors on the show floor, or the 140 countries represented, this landmark event, held at Music City Center in Nashville, Tennessee, was record-breaking in every metric. We extend a huge thank you to our exhibitors, entertainment, award winners, and all attendees for joining our celebration of hunting and for making it the best Convention yet!



**SCI Celebrates Our Champions:** As the leader in defending our freedom to hunt worldwide, advocacy is our top priority, and our annual Convention makes this mission happen. We extend a sincere thank you to elected officials at the state, federal, and international level who are champions for hunting freedoms. From Tennessee, we were joined by Governor Bill Lee for our opening ceremonies and ribbon cutting as well as Lt. Governor Randy McNally and Speaker of the State House Cameron Sexton. We were also thrilled to welcome Tennessee Senators Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty, as well as Representatives Mark Green, John Rose, and Scott Desjarlais. Finally, we were also joined by several Tennessee State elected officials, including Senator Paul Rose and Representatives Chris Todd, Pat Marsh, Ryan Williams, Jesse Chism, Bob Freeman, and Rusty Grills. Our other champions in Congress in attendance included Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (MS), SCI Federal Legislator of the Year and Rep. Paul Gosar (AZ). At the state level, we welcomed Governor Mike Dunleavy (AK), who received our Governor's Award and Lt. Gov. Will Ainsworth, an SCI life member, who led the invocation at Friday night dinner as well as several state wildlife directors from across the country. Internationally, we were honored to host Deputado Eduardo Bolsonaro of Brazil, our International Legislator of the Year, and his father, former President Jair Bolsonaro. We welcomed many honorable dignitaries from southern Africa, including the Honorable Minister of Zambia's Ministry of Tourism and Her Excellency Elsie Sia Kanza, the Tanzanian Ambassador to the United States.



**Thanking Our Exhibitors:** Our world-class exhibitors set up booths in the convention hall to provide attendees with exceptional opportunities to book hunting trips in locales near and far. Some of the outdoor industry's most recognizable companies showcased cutting-edge products, including firearms, accessories, optics, ammunition, archery, gear, and other tactical and hunting goods. Other notable vendors sold fine luxury goods like fur, furnishings, clothing, and jewelry.

**Seminars for Everyone:** Attendees who sought educational and informational sessions could attend presentations about hunting, fishing, shooting, and a myriad of additional outdoor activities. Seminars on everything from Wildlife and Property Management through Food Plots to The Hunter Chef's Wild Game Cooking Demo were held each day of the Convention, and rooms were packed to hear community legends like Jim Shockey and Ramsey Russell speak.

**Hunter Action Fund Luncheon:** Safari Club International is the only hunting organization with a Super PAC (Hunter Action Fund) that educates and activates voters to support pro-hunting legislators. Members gathered at the annual Hunter Action Fund Luncheon at Convention to raise the necessary funds to ensure the hunter's voice is heard. This year, SCI was honored to have Fox News' Katie Pavlich attend as the Hunter Action Fund Luncheon and Auction's keynote speaker.

**Women Go Hunting:** This year's theme focused on the women of SCI, and all women involved in hunting through special events, by featuring their stories, and offering a women-only sweepstakes. More than 200 women gathered at SCI's Mix & Mingle event. Women of all levels of experience and interest in hunting were able to meet their hunting models and icons, network with other women hunters, make new friends and find new hunting partners.

**Evening Entertainment:** Each evening, SCI held dinners and live auctions, which broke all existing fundraising records for SCI's and SCI Foundation's advocacy and conservation efforts, respectively. Convention attendees listened to speakers such as Michelle Curran and Johnny Morris. Following these functions, entertainers, including the Frontmen & Gretchen Wilson, Big & Rich, Lee Brice, and Lynyrd Skynyrd performed for an enthused audience. Another exciting evening event included Barstool Outdoors' Host Sydnie Wells' collaboration with SCI for a late-night celebration of young hunters. We were also joined by some of the biggest names in country music, hall of fame athletes and celebrity stars, ensuring that this convention once again lived up to the hype of what Forbes Magazine called the "Super Bowl for the hunting world."

**2024 Convention:** To those who were unable to attend this year's celebration in Nashville, SCI is excited to announce that the 2024 Convention, celebrating "The Future of Hunting," will be held in Nashville, TN at the Music City Center from Wednesday, January 31st until Saturday, February 3rd, 2024. See you there!

“ I couldn't be more excited about the setting of the SCI Convention, and to be in Nashville with my son JP,” said **Johnny Morris**, noted conservationist and founder of Bass Pro Shops, and winner of the prestigious Beretta and SCI Foundation Conservation Leadership Award in 2016. “It's a vibrant community, a perfect place to bring together sportsmen and women of all ages, and celebrate our shared passions. We look forward to a bright future together.” ”

“ On behalf of everyone at SCI, I would like to say thank you to all who attended and supported the SCI Convention and Ultimate Sportsmen's Market here in Nashville, Tennessee,” said **SCI CEO W. Laird Hamberlin**. “Your attendance and steadfast support of this organization allows us to continue advocating for hunting freedoms in the U.S., and around the world. We look forward to seeing you all again next year for another fantastic SCI Convention.” ”



SCI is the first voice for hunters in Washington, D.C. by monitoring, evaluating, and lobbying on federal legislation impacting hunters and wildlife conservation. SCI ensures that hunting interests are at the forefront when important bills come up by building relationships with Congressional leaders as well as staying current on the issues.

## WINS THIS QUARTER

**Legislation:** the House Water, Wildlife and Fisheries subcommittee held a legislative hearing on the following bills:

- H.R. 764 Trust the Science Act - To require the Secretary of the Interior to reissue regulations removing the gray wolf from the list of endangered and threatened wildlife under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- H.R. 1245 - To direct the Secretary of the Interior to reissue a final rule relating to removing the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population of grizzly bears from the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife.
- H.R. 1419 Comprehensive Grizzly Bear Management Act - To direct the Secretary of the Interior to issue a new rule removing the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem population of grizzly bears from the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife.

Speaking in support of the bills was Dr. Nathan Roberts of the College of the Ozarks; Brian Nesvik, Wyoming Fish and Game Director; and Karli Johnson, a Rancher out of Choteau, Montana. Deputy Director for Policy Stephen Guertin of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Former USFWS Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator Dr. Christopher Servheen spoke in opposition to all proposed bills. SCI thanks Representatives Boebert, Hageman, and Rosendale for crafting science based, common sense legislation to deslist species that have exceeded recovery goals for years. We thank the Water, Wildlife and Fisheries subcommittee and Chairman Bentz for giving this good legislation a platform for discussion.

**Big Tech:** On February 7th, Twitter suspended Senator Steve Daines of Montana for sharing a photo of his pronghorn hunt with his wife. SCI tweeted in response: "Safari Club International stands with @SteveDaines after his Twitter account was suspended for using this profile photo. SCI encourages Members of #Congress to tweet their favorite hunting photos in support of @SteveDaines #StandWithSCI #FirstForHunters #StandWithDaines". Members of Congress and the hunting community rallied behind Senator Daines, and he was released from Twitter Jail! SCI will continue to stand up to any attempts from Big Tech to censor our way of life.



**Convention:** At our 2023 SCI Convention, we welcomed our Federal Legislator of the Year, Cindy Hyde-Smith! Cindy was named our Federal Legislator of the year in 2022 for being an outspoken supporter of conservation and hunting rights. Senator Hyde-Smith's actions are notable in protecting hunters and anglers in their freedoms to hunt and fish on public land as well as being an outspoken supporter and advocate for sportsmen and their endeavors across the state of Mississippi and the country. We were thrilled to formally award her for her dedication to sportsmen and women like us.





## CURRENT THREATS AND ISSUES

**Top Issues:** We asked, you answered. SCI members' top 2023 federal priorities:

- Opposing Trophy Bans
- Opposing Anti-Conservation Bills
- Supporting No-Net-Loss
- Fixing the Endangered Species Act
- Opposing Predator Control Restrictions
- Supporting Access to Lead Ammunition

**The President's Budget:** The Biden-Harris Administration released the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2024. The proposed budget includes \$2.1 billion to fund the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's resource management and conservation programs and to support the administration's priorities, in addition to \$2.0 billion available under permanent appropriations. This provides for, among other items:

- \$624.9 million, an increase of \$83.3 million in funding for the National Wildlife Refuge Service.
- \$133.3 million for recovery and delisting of species currently listed under the ESA.
- \$171.4 million for planning and consultation towards infrastructure and investment.
- \$26.7 million, an increase of \$5.1 million, to FWS International Affairs to expand conservation capacity for "iconic" species.

While SCI acknowledges the increased funding for wildlife conservation in the proposed US Fish and Wildlife budget, these dollars stand to be wasted without serious FWS reform and an overhaul of the Endangered Species Act. Continued pressures on the Service by animal rights groups and a weak, outdated ESA have stood in the way of successful conservation efforts time and again, both domestically and internationally. The Service is currently attempting to undercut the conservation efforts of African nations to limit elephant hunting trophy imports, even though 80% of the world's elephants inhabit the countries where the species is sustainably hunted. The ESA, despite its original intent, fails to recognize successful conservation; gray wolves, for example, have met recovery criteria for over 20 years. Thanks to ESA technicalities, their removal from ESA endangered species lists was blocked by a federal judge. Until these reforms are realized and FWS is willing and able to do their jobs effectively, additional funding will not have the impact that it should.

**Federal Overreach:** The National Park Service accepted public comment on a proposed rule to restrict certain hunting on approximately 20 million acres of National Preserves in Alaska. The National Park Service is proposing to override state law and prohibit certain state-authorized hunting. The National Park Service's rule is based on bogus concerns about public safety and moral opposition to certain hunting that the National Park Service deems to be non-sporting. Alaska's Congressional delegation, Governor, and legislature have all expressed opposition to the proposal. SCI sent out a HAAC alert that received hundreds of responses from our advocates.



SCI is unique among hunting organizations for having in-house lawyers (a total of seven!) dedicated to defending hunting as a conservation tool. Our attorneys have litigated dozens of cases throughout the United States involving domestic and international hunting-related issues and filed seven U.S. Supreme Court briefs on wildlife law. A staff attorney in the European Union's capital of Brussels, Belgium, monitors issues in Europe. Our team is the only one among hunting rights organizations that defends all hunters for all species from around the world.

## WINS THIS QUARTER

**Alaska Federal Subsistence Board:** SCI provided oral and written comments to the Federal Subsistence Board on three proposals that would limit deer hunting in Southeast Alaska. SCI's comments emphasized that not only did each proposal lack state and federal support, but each runs counter to the directives set out in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and the Board's implementing regulations. When each proposal came down to a vote, seven out of eight Board members voted to reject the proposals for failing to meet the criteria set forth in ANILCA. This victory is consistent with SCI's "No Net Loss" policy and crucial for keeping public land access open to all hunters in Alaska.

**Leopard Import Litigation:** SCI filed another brief in defense of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's issuance of individual import permits for sport-hunted leopards from Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, many of which were issued to SCI members. Although the Plaintiffs originally challenged 25 permits, SCI's arguments have thus far whittled that number down to 16 and will likely reduce the number further before the court even considers the merits of the case.

**Court Upholds Black Bear Hunting on National Forests:** A U.S. magistrate judge in Idaho rejected a challenge to the use of bait to hunt black bears on National Forests in Idaho and Wyoming. Anti-hunting groups challenged the use of bait in those two states specifically because black bear hunting there occurs within the range of grizzly bears, which are federally protected under the Endangered Species Act. The groups alleged that the Forest Service's policy of deferring to the states on whether to allow the use of bait increases the chance that black bear hunters will accidentally harvest protected grizzlies. In an amicus brief, Safari Club rebutted the plaintiffs' factual assertions, demonstrating among other things that the use of bait actually allows for greater hunter selectivity and reduces the chance of accidental harvest of grizzlies. The federal government, Idaho, and Wyoming were defendants and argued against the legal merits of the plaintiffs' claims. The court's ruling leaves in place the Forest Service's policy. The anti-hunting groups still have an opportunity to appeal the district court's decision to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. If they do, Safari Club will continue to fight against this blatant attempt to restrict hunting access to public lands.

**15th Annual Continuing Legal Education Program:** SCI hosted its annual Continuing Legal Education program on Wildlife Law at SCI's Annual Convention in Nashville. The CLE provides a unique opportunity for attorneys to fulfill their annual legal education requirements with a program focused on sustainable use hunting and hot topics from experts in the field of wildlife law. Presenters included Margaret Everson, former acting Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, who spoke to challenges facing the implementation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and their respective solutions; David Willms, Associate Vice President, Public Lands, for the National Wildlife Federation, who addressed public land access conflicts in the western United States; Cpt. Matt Majors, General Counsel Torrey Grimes, and Boating Division Chief Col. Darren Rider from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, who discussed the laws and social concerns governing boating under the influence; and SCI's litigation team, who presented on current and recent wildlife law litigation and legal ethics. Approximately 50 attorneys tuned in online and in-person to engage in these conversations.

## CURRENT THREATS AND ISSUES

**Supreme Court Denied Petition for Certiorari in Alaska Kenai Case:** The Supreme Court denied the State of Alaska's petition for review of an erroneous decision from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals holding that the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) allowed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to preempt state hunting regulations on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. SCI had filed a brief in support of the State's petition, but the Supreme Court declined to take on this important question of federal overreach of state wildlife management authority, without any explanation for the denial. Federal overreach into state wildlife management authority, especially in Alaska, remains an ongoing issue that SCI actively and consistently fights against.

**Proposed Rule Restricting Certain Hunting on National Preserves:** The National Park Service proposed a rule to amend its regulations for sport hunting on National Preserves in Alaska. The proposed rule reinstates restrictions from a 2015 rule that SCI challenged in court. The 2015 rule prohibited the hunting of bears over bait, an extended season for wolves and coyotes in certain game management units, and the use of dogs to hunt black bears, as well as two practices (hunting of bears in dens and hunting of swimming caribou in certain remote game management units) that are not widely practiced, but important cultural traditions among certain Alaska Native communities. All five restrictions were later withdrawn by a 2020 rule that properly deferred to state management of wildlife. The 2023 proposed rule would reverse the 2020 rule and implement the restrictions again. SCI has been defending the 2020 rule in court for several years, and will likely have to go back to court to challenge this new proposed rule, if finalized. SCI submitted comprehensive comments in opposition to the proposed rule, and over 2,100 SCI members used the Hunter Advocacy Action Center to submit their own comments asking the National Park Service to withdraw the proposal.

**Firearm Restrictions:** SCI is involved in a case in California which challenges a law prohibiting the marketing of firearms and related products in a manner that appeals to minors. The district court ruled in favor of the State of California, and SCI and its partners have appealed. At the same time, SCI is engaging in a lawsuit challenging magazine size limits and new permit requirements for firearm purchases in Oregon, in part because this law affects the ability of SCI chapters to fundraise with firearms raffles and sales. Although SCI's mission is not explicitly to defend access to firearms, some new restrictions have a disproportionate impact on hunting. SCI will continue to monitor and challenge these laws.



In every state, SCI monitors, tracks, and evaluates legislation impacting hunting, hunters, and wildlife conservation. SCI works with pro-sportsmen elected leaders through the collaboration of the individual state sportsmen's caucuses. Building relationships between state leaders and sportsmen as well as staying current on the issues ensures that SCI is protecting your freedom to hunt. The SCI State Advocacy Network and local state chapters play a critical role in the success of SCI's advocacy efforts. Hunters become a valuable voice in each state by joining SCI's Hunter Advocacy Action Center.

## IN THE FIELD

**Colorado:** SCI State & Local Liaison Chris Tymeson, along with several local Colorado SCI members, attended the inaugural Colorado Wildlife Conservation Project's (CWCP) Legislative Reception in Denver, Colorado at the historic Buckhorn Exchange. The event was attended by over 20 members of the legislature and the leadership of the Colorado Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus. The event was focused on discussing current legislation, meeting new legislators and honoring former House Minority Leader Hugh McKean, who passed away unexpectedly last fall. The CWCP is an alliance of diverse wildlife organizations, including SCI, with a common interest in conserving wildlife and wildlife habitats, and in preserving our hunting, angling, and conservation heritage.

**Georgia Sportsmen's Day at the Capitol:** On February 6, State & Local Liaison Bee Frederick attended the Georgia Sportsmen's Day at the Capitol with Governor Brian Kemp, the First Lady, DNR Commissioner Mark Williams, SCI Director at Large Trevor Santos and SCI Georgia President and Director at Large Chris Albrecht.

**North American Wildlife Conference:** Wildlife professionals from all across North America gathered in St. Louis, Missouri during the week of March 20th for the annual 88th North American Wildlife Conference, and Safari Club International was in attendance to represent its membership and engage on conservation and hunting issues. State and local liaisons Bee Frederick and Chris Tymeson attended, meeting with wildlife regulators and other non-governmental organizations on topics of importance to Safari Club International and its chapters and members. The jam-packed meeting included attendance at the following committees, working groups and related gatherings covering these topics: legal, sustainable use, threatened and endangered

species, American Wildlife Conservation Partnership, feral swine, the future of the North American Model of Wildlife Management, human wildlife conflict, Boone and Crockett, and hunting and shooting sports participation. SCI continues to lead from the front and is always first for hunters.

**Texas:** SCI Western State and Local Liaison Chris Tymeson addressed the crowd at the Alamo SCI Chapter banquet in San Antonio, Texas in early March. He discussed the advocacy efforts of SCI on a national basis as well as in Texas and the value of partnerships and leveraging relationships with the chapters, the Texas Trophy Hunters Association and the Safari Club International Foundation.



Left to Right: Bee Frederick, Chris Tymeson, Ben Cassidy at the North American Wildlife Conference

**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Mid-Winter Meeting:** State wildlife directors, deputies, commissioners and other professionals from across the western United States and Canada gathered in Albuquerque, New Mexico during the week of January 4, 2023 for the annual mid-winter Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) meeting and Safari Club International was in attendance to represent the membership and engage on conservation and hunting issues. SCI State and Local Liaison Chris Tymeson attended the meeting, interacting with wildlife directors, federal partners and other non-governmental organizations on topics of importance to SCI, its chapters and members. The jam-packed meeting included these pertinent topics, among many others: the WAFWA Executive Committee meeting, forums involving game and fish commissioners and wildlife state directors and deputies, federal updates, and WAFWA initiative updates.

**State Wildlife Directors' Forum:** On Friday afternoon at the Convention, Safari Club International held a State Wildlife Director's Forum. Five state wildlife directors, covering the continent from Alaska to Georgia, attended the forum which was moderated by Safari Club International Foundation carnivore specialist Maria Davidson. Representing states with no bear season, limited bear seasons, and extensive bear hunting seasons, the directors answered questions from Ms. Davidson and the public related to bear management and bear hunting. The directors also identified human/bear conflict areas and concerns moving into the future with bear management authority. SCI thanks the state directors from Georgia, Tennessee, Alaska, Oklahoma and Alabama for participating in the forum.

**Virginia Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus:** In early February, SCI Eastern States and Local Liaison Bee Frederick attended and presented to the Virginia Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus in Richmond, Virginia. The meeting, attended by pro-sportsmen legislators, VA DWR staff, and various sportsmen's groups, provided an overview of various bear management issues from across the country. Specifically, the presentation highlighted threats to state-based active management of large carnivores and also provided general recognition and commendation for DWR's great work in managing Virginia's growing bear population.



## AROUND THE STATES

**Alaska:** Last week, SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments on the proposed Board of Game, Wolf Management Policy stating that it generally demonstrates responsible and sustainable management of wolves while maintaining high levels of opportunity for hunters. SCI also submitted comments regarding the proposed Board of Game, Bear Conservation, Harvest, and Management Policy, stating that it generally demonstrates responsible and sustainable management of bears while maintaining high levels of opportunity for hunters.

**Alaska:** There are currently two Joint Resolutions in the Alaska Legislature, H.J.R. 10 and S.J.R. 8, that need support. The Joint Resolutions would be sent to members of Congress and government officials within the Department of Interior and the National Park Service (NPS) to request the NPS withdraw the NPS proposed rule, that would override state law and prohibit certain state-authorized hunting on approximately 20 million acres of National Preserves in Alaska. SCI issued an action alert to members in Alaska requesting they contact their legislators and ask them to support the Resolutions.

**Alaska:** SCI issued an action alert for Southeast Alaskan deer proposals in front of the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB). The proposals lacked state and federal support and ran counter to the directives set out in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) because the Federal Subsistence Board may only restrict subsistence use by Non-Federally Qualified Users (NFQU's) to conserve deer populations or for the continuation of subsistence use, and neither were found on the facts in the proposals. The proposals could not be approved under FSB regulations because the proponents failed to show how the proposals were necessary to ensure the conservation of healthy populations of fish and wildlife, to continue subsistence uses of such populations, or for public safety or administration. The FSB subsequently rejected the petitions.



**California:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments on the California Fish and Game Commission's proposed changes to waterfowl seasons. "Given that the 2023-24 Federal Frameworks allow for a liberal duck and goose season in the Pacific flyway, SCI appreciates the approach of the Department and Commission in recommending utilizing all of the days possible under the frameworks for waterfowl hunters. We would like to note however that combining the veteran and active military days allowance with the youth hunting opportunity days may result in diminished youth opportunity through increased competition for the same resource, particularly so on public lands."



**Colorado:** SCI President Sven Lindquist provided comments on the proposed Colorado Wolf Recovery and Management Plan, stating in part “The North American Model of Wildlife Management has long been successful in restoring and sustaining wildlife because it is built on scientific principles and a sustainable funding model. Wolf management and recovery in Colorado should be consistent with the North American Model and managed within biological, ecological and social carrying capacity for the species, just like other species under the model.

Additionally, because the North American Model is built on sustainable funding, the Wolf Restoration and Management Plan must include an estimated recovery cost prior to implementation. Transparency for the public is a basic minimum requirement for government, and the public is entitled to know how and who pays for implementation and recovery of the species at all times. Deer, elk and moose populations need to be closely monitored, particularly in areas where wolves are restored, using an accurate starting baseline. Colorado’s deer population has struggled for the last couple of decades and CPW has reduced cow elk licenses by 68,000 since 2004. According to Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 46% of the department’s license revenue is from elk licenses and the agency expects the trend of reducing elk licenses will continue particularly after wolves are reintroduced, adding additional financial pressure to both the agency and current license buyers.

Additionally, it should be noted that managing wolf populations through lethal harvest in units where ungulate numbers are below objective is justified to recover ungulate numbers. Within the plan, the use of approved lethal removal of problem wolves to address depredation must be included as a management option. Lethal removal is a critically important tool to employ when and where necessary on a case-by-case, context-specific basis. Lethal removal should endeavor to prevent, de-escalate and minimize conflict. And finally, SCI supports the draft recovery plan thresholds and opposes any increase in the thresholds for wolf recovery phases’ start and end points. After wolves meet the recovery goals, they should be reclassified as game animals, and science-based regulated harvest by hunters should be used as the primary management technique.”

**Connecticut Bear Hunting:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments in support of Senate Bill 1148, which would authorize a limited black bear hunting season in Connecticut. Senate Bill 1148 is a first step to managing the bear population to ensure its growth does not outpace the tolerance of people living in or near its habitat. While Senate Bill 1148 is a welcomed measure, SCI strongly recommends that the proposed bear hunt lottery season, limited to 50 tags and specific to Litchfield county, be expanded to include a larger area. Given the growth rate and expanding black bear population, limiting potential harvest to one county will have limited impact on the state’s overall population, and is unlikely to significantly lower human-bear interactions.

The DEEP’s reported black bear sightings note three other counties with as many or more black bear sightings than Litchfield County. The black bear population in Connecticut has been growing for a number of years, with a consequent increase in human-bear conflicts. The trained professionals at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) acknowledge that the state’s black bear population is “increasing and expanding” and that “...the resident population, including juveniles, is estimated to be around 1,000-1,200. The majority of the population inhabits the northwest quarter of the state but is continuing to expand into suitable habitat in eastern Connecticut.” Additionally, the DEEP acknowledged suitable habitat for black bears is now more widespread.

Being so, the “rapid increase” in bear population – and associated human-bear interactions – which has occurred over the last 20 years, is expected to continue. Yet, discussions over the proper management of this species have, unfortunately, been most often dictated by emotion instead of science. Although SCI generally supports wildlife management decisions coming from the professionals in the DEEP, we support this bill because it is necessary to provide management flexibility for Connecticut’s growing bear population. To avoid unchecked growth of the black bear population and reduce human-bear conflicts, SCI supports active management of black bears including a robust population estimate and explicit harvest goals tied to that estimate. SCI fears that, without such measures, the state may otherwise have to address public safety issues caused by a growing bear population in a densely populated state.

**Connecticut Sunday Hunting:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments in Connecticut in support of Senate Bill 1149, which would eliminate all restrictions for Sunday hunting on public and private property. State law currently only allows for archery deer hunting on Sundays on private land as well as hunting on private licensed shooting preserves, regulated dog training areas, and permitted field trial events. SCI strongly believes that increasing additional access seven days a week for sportsmen and women, and youth, will bring many benefits to the state, including: increased access, increased recruitment and retention of licensed hunters, and increased economic benefits.

**Florida:** SCI staff has been actively engaged in discussions in the Sunshine State regarding legislation that would constitutionally enshrine the right to hunt and fish as well as the potential to bring back a limited bear hunt. These efforts are primarily focused on working together with partners to ensure the strongest language possible for constitutional language to protect the right to hunt, as well as working with the state agency and partners on how to bring back a black bear hunt given the political realities on the ground.

**Idaho:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments in support of Idaho's Gray Wolf Plan 2023-2028. "The Draft Idaho Gray Wolf Plan 2023-2028 generally demonstrates responsible and sustainable management of wolves while maintaining high levels of opportunity for hunters. SCI believes that sound science-based conservation involving hunting as the primary management tool, while maximizing opportunities for all huntable species, including predators such as wolves, is necessary to the long-term health of wildlife. Hunters have long paid the way for conservation, both game and non-game wildlife, and maximizing opportunity for hunting is also key to long-term funding for all conservation. Hunting benefits wildlife conservation."

**Kansas:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments on a bill for hunter education in the schools stating, "Recruitment of hunters is critical for the long-term success of wildlife and recruitment

is one leg of the overall National R3 Initiative, to recruit, retain and reactivate hunters. Hunters have long paid the way for conservation, both game and non-game wildlife, and maximizing recruitment and opportunity for hunting is also key to long-term funding for all conservation."



**Maryland Tundra Swan:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments in support of a proposed new regulated hunting opportunity for tundra swans in Maryland. House Bill 954 would require the Maryland DNR to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to establish an annual tundra swan hunt, via permits provided by the USFWS and distributed through a lottery-based system. House Bill 954 would require a permit for hunting tundra swan and require permit holders to report the necessary information for management purposes to the DNR following a potential season. Currently, nine states – including Delaware, Virginia, and North Carolina in the Atlantic Flyway – allow for the opportunity to harvest tundra swans. According to the most recent information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Survey, the population estimate for the Eastern Population of tundra swans is 95,000 which is 9% higher than the previous year. This population of tundra swans winter along the Mid-Atlantic eastern shore coastal areas of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. A potential tundra swan season in Maryland would be similar to the season in Virginia which "is authorized and conducted as specified in the Atlantic Flyway Tundra Swan Management Plan and Hunt Plan, with limits and guidelines as specified under an MOU with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service". Currently, there are 5,600 hunting permits allowed for the eastern population of tundra swans with most of those permits allocated to North Carolina (4,721). The remaining permits are split between Virginia with 532 and Delaware with 347. With the current population count, potential hunting permits for Maryland would not be additional permits, rather reallocated from nearby states.



**Maryland Conservation Funding and Sunday Hunting:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments for Senate Bill 327, which would provide a tremendous increase in conservation funding for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) while also increasing access and opportunities for both experienced and beginner sportsmen and women. The provisions within Senate Bill 327 provide unique opportunities for Maryland to further its strong hunting heritage, foster the next generation of sportsmen and women, increase habitat management and infrastructure improvement to public lands, and grow research and understanding of various game species. All told, the modest fee increases in Senate Bill 327 – the first in over 30 years – would provide almost \$9 million in additional funding the Maryland DNR, specifically for enhancing the state’s natural resources and the opportunities to enjoy them.

Additionally, removing barriers for entry, such as costs for non-resident college students, Sunday waterfowl prohibitions, and physical barriers for those in suburban and exurban areas, will undoubtedly help to recruit and retain hunters in Maryland. Specifically, this bill: increases the price of the resident and non-resident hunting licenses by a few dollars, increases the price of the state duck stamp by a few dollars, establishes a Sitka deer stamp to hunt Sitka deer, removes the prohibition against hunting waterfowl on Sundays, establishes the “Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program” within the Maryland DNR to help provide outdoor and hunting education to underserved communities, and allows non-resident students at a college or university in Maryland to obtain a licenses under a resident rate.

**Michigan Banquet Elected Officials Forum:** SCI joined thirteen other hunting and conservation organizations in a letter to the Michigan Legislature in support of appropriation for voluntary wetland restoration. The letter stated that the signed organizations “understand the value that wetlands bring to our Great Lakes state and respectfully request that the legislature appropriate at least \$30 million of the state’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds or surplus general funds to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to work in partnership with the private sector, local communities, and landowners to accelerate wetland conservation work in the Lake Erie and Saginaw Bay watersheds.”

**Montana:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments to the Montana House Judiciary Committee in support of the constitutional right to hunt, fish, and trap. “Hunting, fishing and trapping are under attack every day all across the United States and Montana is no exception. While Montana currently has a harvest heritage for wild fish and game contained in Article IX, section 7, of the Montana Constitution, that language could be strengthened and explicitly expanded for hunting, fishing, trapping as well as current means and methods. Furthermore, the proposed language gives preference to hunting, fishing and trapping as the primary means of managing wildlife and will protect wildlife managers, hunters, anglers, and trappers well into the future as more urbanization occurs and fewer people have a direct connection with the land and species residing there.”

**Montana:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments on behalf of SCI on the Montana Grizzly Bear Plan, supporting Alternative B and noted that where connectivity with a population core is not likely, grizzly bear presence should not be an objective, and individual bears should be tolerated only to the extent that they do not conflict with human safety or human uses of the landscape.



**Montana:** SCI stood up for hunting, fishing, and trapping in Montana. With the recent election results, there was a limited window of opportunity to give Montana voters the choice to amend the Montana Constitution and protect their future hunting heritage by safeguarding current means and methods of harvest. SCI issued an action alert and encouraged all legislators to cosponsor the bill and the bill sponsor obtained the necessary number of co-sponsors in a few days.

**Nevada:** Sven Lindquist also submitted comments in support of the proposed changes to Commission General Regulation 502, particularly the changes related to the unused bonus points earned while applying for a junior turkey hunt to be automatically transferred to the adult category for wild turkeys.

**Nevada:** SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments in opposition to AB 102, which would prohibit certain competitions in which certain animals are taken. “SCI opposes the provisions contained in AB 102. Participants in hunting tournaments are subject to the same hunting wildlife laws and regulations, such as methods of take or hunting hours, as those hunters who don’t participate in hunting tournaments, contrary to misinformation presented by those opposed to the tournaments. Further, the tournaments or contests do not present a biological risk to the species as once again, the hunters are constrained to the same bag limits as those hunters who don’t participate in tournaments, again contrary to misinformation presented by those opposed to the tournaments. Because there is no discernable biological or legal difference between hunting with tournaments and hunting without tournaments, this bill essentially just boils down to cancelling a segment of hunting that the proponents of the bill do not like, cancel culture at its finest.”



**New York Trophy Import Ban:** Once again, misguided New York legislators are attempting to restrict the legal importation of African species from the countries with the largest populations of these species in the world—and who rely on these species to support their well-managed conservation programs. Senate bill 3302, and its Assembly companion Assembly Bill 584, the “Big Five African Trophies Act,” would ban in the State of New York the importation, transportation, and possession of six major African species of wildlife, the African elephant, lion, leopard, black rhinoceros, white rhinoceros, and giraffe. Similarly, Assembly Bill 518 would prohibit the possession and transport of certain animals (including the aforementioned species) and body parts thereof at airports and port facilities owned or operated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

As always, SCI is quick to point out two facts: Adoption of this legislation will undoubtedly have a negative impact on the actual conservation of these species, and these types of laws are unenforceable and preempted by federal law. SCI President Sven Lindquist submitted comments on the Senate Bill and both Assembly Bills. SCI has also produced a Hunter Action Advocacy Center alert and continued to be the tip of spear in opposition to trophy import bans and also provided grassroots support through various communications efforts.

Unfortunately, Senate Bill 3302 moved out of the respective Senate committee with only one dissenting vote and then subsequently passed the full Senate on a 55-8 vote. The bill is currently in the Assembly and assigned to the Committee on Environmental Conservation. Most recently, SCI sent a legal letter to the Assembly leadership, appropriate Committee Chair, members, and the bill’s sponsor which outlined how the bill is preempted by federal law and, importantly, would negatively impact the African communities and the conservation of the species the bill purports to protect. SCI is also working with African voices on the ground to provide first-hand perspectives on the impacts of these bills.

**New Jersey Bear Hunting:** For the past twenty years, SCI has been actively involved in the New Jersey bear hunting saga. In the last few months, SCI has supported the emergency bear hunt and also recently submitted official comments supporting the adoption of the new Comprehensive Black Bear Management Policy (CBBMP) and the reopening of a regulated black bear hunting season. SCI official comments in part read: “SCI strongly supports the adoption of the new CBBMP and the reopening of a regulated black bear hunting season. New Jersey has both the densest human population and densest black bear population in the country. The bear population is capable of rapid growth. (Exactly how rapid was demonstrated by a doubling of the population in just two years, from 2018 to 2020, when hunting was closed on state lands but allowed elsewhere.) Regulated hunting is not only necessary but essential to responsibly manage the population, reduce human-bear conflicts and property damage, and maintain public safety”.

In addition, SCI helped to place an in-state opinion editorial from Lehigh Valley Chapter President Bob Newland supporting the CBBMP and prepare Bob to provide in-person public comments in support of the CBBMP. Despite a legal challenge, the emergency hunt included two short windows in December that produced a 7% harvest of the overall population, far short of the targeted 20%. Following the emergency hunt, the updated five-year CBBMP, which SCI supported as noted above, is currently awaiting a final approval.

**Oregon:** SCI signed onto a joint legislative coalition letter regarding the composition of Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission. The OFWC must be restructured as it is tied to congressional districts and Oregon added a congressional district due to population changes noted in the most recent census. Keeping the OFWC tied to congressional districts and using the same number of commissioners will leave rural areas largely unrepresented on the Commission. Additionally, fish and wildlife commission composition is a priority for SCI as those opposed to hunting and fishing see commissions as a way to infiltrate wildlife management and move away from the tried and true North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Changing commissions in that manner is a growing trend across the western United States and SCI continues to oppose such changes at every turn.

**Utah:** Senate Bill 469 was modified in the waning hours of the Utah Legislative session to remove science-based protections for mountain lions without any dialogue with hunters and the Division of Wildlife Resources. SCI issued an action alert for Utah members to contact the Governor and urge him to veto the bill. The Governor ultimately signed the bill as it contained other provisions beneficial to wildlife.



**Wisconsin Draft Wolf Management Plan Comments:** SCI submitted comments on Wisconsin’s 2022 Draft Wolf Management Plan. SCI supports Wisconsin’s efforts to collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including SCI’s Wisconsin Chapter, to develop and implement a management plan for wolves. The official comments noted that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”) should aim to ensure that wolves do not negatively impact Wisconsin’s deer, elk, and other wildlife populations. Importantly, the draft plan contemplates allowing DNR to have the appropriate flexibility for managing an increasing wolf population, including annual harvests once the population is removed from the federal list of endangered species. However, SCI remains concerned that the draft plan does not include a specific state-wide wolf population objective and that DNR may be underestimating the current number of wolves throughout Wisconsin. SCI also requested that DNR re-evaluate how it considers public input on wolf management and regulated wolf hunting.

SCI's specialized staff have collaborated with conservation partners and our international chapters to interact with government leaders and agencies on behalf of the hunting community. Together we challenge efforts that threaten hunting freedoms, trophy importation and conservation efforts abroad. Whether it's hunting partridge, roe deer or Cape buffalo, SCI has and will continue to defend your freedom to hunt.

## WINS THIS QUARTER

**SCI Increases International Influence with New Hires:** SCI significantly expanded its international reach with two new hires in early 2023. In January, Juan Magaz van Nes was hired as European Liaison and Scott Talbott was hired as Guides and Outfitters Liaison. In this new position, Juan Magaz will work with SCI's government relations, advocacy and membership teams to increase SCI's footprint across Europe, defending hunting and impacting policy in favor of sustainable use conservation. Based in Brussels, a political scientist fluent in five languages and a European Union law expert, he has the expertise required to help SCI navigate EU institutions, advise on government relations, and enhance communications in Europe. Scott Talbott is the former director of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. His new position as Guides and Outfitters Liaison is a critical bridge between SCI and the guide and outfitter community. Talbott will represent SCI and serve as a communications conduit to professional hunting associations throughout North America, Africa and other regions. He will be responsible for informing and educating professional hunters on SCI's hunter advocacy work and the benefits of joining and supporting SCI and its mission.

**A Win for Sportsmen in Canada!** In February, the Canadian government withdrew two amendments, which if implemented would have qualified as the most extensive firearm ban in the country's history. The amendments would have added thousands of additional models of firearms (including commonly used hunting rifles and shotguns) to the 2020 list of banned firearms and would have added additional prohibitions on magazine capacity. This ban was a direct attack on hunters and would have had devastating effects to conservation, guides and outfitters, and responsible hunters—not criminals. SCI's Hunter Advocacy Action Center alert resulted in over 500 messages sent to the Minister - your voice makes a difference! This is a huge win for sportsmen and women in Canada and beyond!

**Robust International Presence at SCI's Annual Convention:** With 140 countries represented, SCI's 51st Annual Convention was record-breaking in every metric. Notably, Deputado Eduardo Bolsonaro was awarded SCI's International Legislator of the Year. He has been a champion in Brazil for hunting access, firearms rights, and conservation. SCI was also joined by honorable dignitaries from Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe and extends a special thank you to H.M. Rodney Sikumba, Honorable Minister of Tourism in Zambia and H.E. Elsie Sia Kanza, the Tanzanian Ambassador to the U.S., for their attendance. SCI thanks all government representatives for their extraordinary efforts in support of hunting and sustainable use wildlife management!

**Safari Club International and Cinegetica, Two Major Hunting Fairs, Sign a New Strategic Alliance in Madrid:** The CEO of Safari Club International Mr. W. Laird Hamberlin and the President of Cinegética Mr. Marcos Quintas signed today the first transatlantic agreement of fairs for hunting. This is the largest alliance to promote hunters' way of life and will continue to defend conservation and the hunting culture under the common slogan "United For Conservation." W. Laird Hamberlin, CEO of Safari Club International, travelled specially to Madrid to sign the agreement. "SCI is excited to cement such a crucial, transatlantic partnership. This marks an important new chapter in the global effort to defend hunters' freedoms in Europe. The Cinegética and SCI partnership is critical as we prepare future generations to go afield while effectively communicating the essential role of hunters in conservation." He adds, "As one of the most diverse hunting countries in Europe, easily accessible for all of Europe and with a large population of hunters as demonstrated in last year's pro-countryside march, Spain is an ideal setting for the preservation of hunting and conservation worldwide."

## CURRENT THREATS AND ISSUES

**Proposed Rule Restricting Import of Elephant Trophies:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to amend regulations governing the import of African elephants, both live and as trophies. With respect to trophies, the proposal would require that African range states provide an annual certification regarding their elephant management and conservation programs, and would prohibit the import of trophies from any country whose national laws have not been deemed to fully implement the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. SCI submitted extensive [comments](#) opposing the proposal and explaining how it is illegal and will harm the well-managed conservation hunting programs in the southern African countries that protect over 81% of the world's elephant. SCI members also answered the call to a [Hunter Advocacy Action Center](#) alert and submitted 1,420 letters in opposition to the proposal. SCI applauds members and partners who submitted letters in opposition and encourages all hunters to engage in SCI's advocacy campaigns. The Service will now have to respond to all the substantive issues raised in the comment letters. Because tens of thousands of letters were received, it will likely be late 2023 or early 2024 before the Service is able to publish a final rule (assuming they do so, and do not heed the calls of SCI members, range states, and rural communities to withdraw the proposal). The proposed rule unfortunately continues a series of burdensome import restrictions on hunting trophies imposed by the United States. Preventing trophy import bans remains one of SCI's top priorities.



**UK Trophy Ban Passes House of Commons:** On March 17, the UK House of Commons passed the “Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill.” The bill covers all species listed under the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES), a total of more than 6,500 species, a vast majority of which are not hunted game species. While it includes elephants, rhinos, leopards and other iconic animals, non-CITES species such as Cape buffalo, kudu, and many others are not included in the ban. Furthermore, an amendment included by the House of Commons creates an expert advisory board to advise the government on trophy hunting issues. The bill now moves to the House of Lords for consideration, where other amendments may be introduced. As has been reported many times, the science does not support a trophy import ban. Range states, local community representatives, sustainable use organizations, unbiased biologists in the UK, and other stakeholders have extensively written and spoken in opposition of the bill. SCI urges the House of Lords to listen to the experts regarding the benefits of trophy hunting. Science—not emotion—must dictate the outcome.



## CURRENT THREATS AND ISSUES

**Duck Hunting in Australia under Attack:** Recently Down Under, the state government of Victoria announced a shortened waterfowl season coupled with the creation of a full inquiry into waterfowl hunting—a likely attempt to ultimately ban it altogether. This is in response to vocal animal rights groups and activists who make false and emotionally-driven claims against hunters' ethics, claiming animal cruelty and extinction risks. But hunting ensures protection of habitat, resulting in long term sustainability of species, and there are no conservation concerns for many waterfowl species in Australia. In March, the nine-member select committee was established. While the committee's stated purpose is to "investigate" the duck season, it is blatantly anti-hunting and anti-conservation. In fact, the motion to establish the committee was made by a minister who openly admits that she wants to ban waterfowl hunting and that the outcome of the committee's review will not change her mind. Other states in Australia have formerly banned duck hunting, and unfortunately, the state government of South Australia has now formed a similar committee, with a similar stated purpose. SCI is closely monitoring this situation and taking action at critical steps.



**USFWS to Decide Fate of Hippos and Leopards:** Recently, anti-hunting groups sued the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their failure to act in a timely manner on petitions to list hippo under the Endangered Species Act and to increase trade restrictions for leopard under the ESA. These actions by anti-hunting and animal rights groups will unnecessarily tie up valuable federal resources, for species that will not benefit in any way from an ESA listing. The petitions and litigation highlight why Congress needs to change the ESA. These groups are shamefully forcing the Service to deal with meritless petitions that will deflect resources better directed at actually conserving wildlife. The Service subsequently determined that listing of hippo under the ESA "may be warranted," and now it will conduct a status review of the species to determine whether to propose listing hippo. For leopard, the Service settled with the anti-hunting groups, agreeing to make a determination whether to increase trade restrictions by June 2027. The Service also agreed to pay the anti-hunting groups more than \$30,000 in legal fees—an outrageous amount for simple litigation challenging a missed deadline and more reason why Congress must amend the ESA.

SCI's Hunter Advocacy Action Center (HAAC) is the most effective tool for sportsmen and women to take action on critical issues affecting the hunting community. The HAAC achieves real results in local, state, federal, and international governing bodies. Your voice matters – take action today at <https://safariclub.org/haac/>.



## NEW AND CONTINUING CAMPAIGNS THIS QUARTER

### TOP CAMPAIGNS

**Hunting Priorities:** Based on the results of the SCI advocacy poll, a letter to Representatives and Senators on priorities for the hunting community; these are opposing trophy bans, opposing anti-conservation bills, supporting no-net-loss, fixing the endangered species act, opposing predator control restrictions, and supporting access to lead ammunition.

**No-Net-Loss:** Petition to the Biden Administration to maintain the current level of hunting and fishing access across the country.

**Women Go Hunting:** These stories are showcasing women in the SCI community in publications and digital media. To date, 83 women have shared their stories with great success on social media and other communications.

**FWS Elephants:** Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) released a proposal that would increase restrictions on the import of sport-hunted elephants and likely result in a ban on elephant imports from several range states.

**Alaska NPS:** Opposing the National Park Service' proposed rule to restrict certain hunting on approximately 20 million acres of National Preserves in Alaska.

**State HAACs:** Utah mountain lion management, opposing New York trophy import ban, supporting Connecticut black bear season

### TOP CAMPAIGNS THIS QUARTER

Alaska National Preserves



FWS Elephants



Montana Right to Hunt



Women Go Hunting



Hunting Priorities



## SOCIAL MEDIA



Recent highlights on social media include the best of SCI's Convention, podcast interviews, advocacy updates, hunting stories, and HAAC Alerts. SCI also released our Convention [recap video](#) - stay tuned for the 2024 Convention teaser. Be sure to follow SCI on social media for the most up-to-date news for the hunting community!

The numbers below show the growth each platform saw in the last quarter alone:

- Facebook: 7.5 + million impressions
- Instagram: 158 posts published
- Twitter: growth on metrics across the board
- YouTube: 1.3 + million views
- TikTok: 14,000 + followers

## SCI ONLINE STORE

In Q3, SCI expanded its branding and merchandise efforts in conjunction with partnering brands like Kuiu, Tom Beckbe, Ball and Buck, McKenna Quinn, and Beretta. These products were sold on the show floor at SCI Convention along with Limited Edition Nashville 2023 Merchandise. SCI is proud to announce that these products were a blowout success! Visit <https://safariclub.org/shop/>



## PODCAST

We are excited to announce the official podcast of Safari Club International hosted by Ben Cassidy! SCI's ["First For Hunters" Podcast](#) is the only podcast keeping you up to date on legislation affecting hunters and wildlife conservation worldwide. Tune in for bi-weekly episodes discussing international hunting legislation, wildlife conservation, trending hunting news, and updates on SCI's membership and convention.

## WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Stay up to date on SCI's Advocacy activities. Sign up for the weekly International Government & Public Affairs Updates from Ben Cassidy. Email Claire Fortenberry at [cfortenberry@scifirstforhunters.org](mailto:cfortenberry@scifirstforhunters.org) to subscribe!





### *About SCI*

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Safari Club International (SCI) is the leading defender of the freedom to hunt and supporter of wildlife conservation worldwide. SCI is unique in the scope of our ability to defend and advance our freedom to hunt, mobilizing 146 chapters and an affiliate network representing 7.2 million hunters around the world.

SCI is also the only hunting rights organization with an international advocacy team based in Washington, D.C. and an all-species focus. In the U.S., SCI's fulltime staff of professional advocates speak for hunters at federal and state levels on important issues such as access to hunting on public lands and the authority of states to manage their wildlife.

Through SCI's Hunter Advocacy Action Center (HAAC), SCI educates and activates hunter advocates on issues in their communities and states, as well as nationwide. SCI's chapter networks in Canada and Europe are involved in advocacy on local and global hunting issues, protecting sportsmen's rights to hunt and import trophies. For more than two decades, SCI has been the major defender of hunters in courtrooms throughout the country.

SCI is First for Hunters.