



HUNTER ADVOCACY

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPORT



SCI IN ACTION

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

Fall's Field Notes
October - December, 2023



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

Safari Club International protects the freedom to hunt and promotes sustainable-use wildlife conservation worldwide. Through proactive advocacy, access to content for the outdoors lifestyle, and a network of hunting enthusiasts, SCI advances the interests of the hunting community. SCI's advocacy efforts:

- ***Protect and improve hunting access and education***
- ***Promote science-based wildlife management***
- ***Stop government overreach of wildlife management***
- ***Collaborate with global communities, wildlife authorities, and other stakeholders pursuing wildlife stewardship***
- ***Champion the hunters' lifestyle***

SCI's advocacy work falls into these priorities, as showcased in this quarterly report.

It has been a busy quarter for SCI's International Government and Public Affairs team, with many wins for the hunting community. Engaging with federal, state, and international stakeholders and decision makers, SCI's Advocacy team addressed critical issues and advocated for sustainable use wildlife conservation around the world.

Our work would not be possible without our dedicated advocates, members, and donors. We extend a sincere thank you to all of you and we look forward to seeing you at SCI Convention in Nashville, Tennessee from January 31 - February 3!



W. Laird Hamberlin
CEO



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

Protect & Improve Hunter Access and Education

Opening the Hunters' Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Thanks to the generous donation of Armand and Mary Brachman, SCI's D.C. headquarters has been dedicated as our official Advocacy Center. In October, SCI hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the dedication, with SCI leadership, senior staff, legislators, dignitaries, and partners in attendance. Our central location on Capitol Hill enables us to take the fight for our hunting rights where it matters most.



Protect & Improve Hunter Access and Education

Another Busy Quarter for Engaging with Federal, State, and International Regulators

The Advocacy team had another busy quarter submitting comments on proposed federal, state, and international policies that will affect hunting rights and access. We submitted 29 comment letters and 3 action alerts in the past three months.

Federal: Among other things, SCI weighed in on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed establishment of an experimental grizzly bear population in Washington State. Our [comments](#) emphasized the importance of hunting as a management tool for growing bear populations, and the need to protect the potential delisting from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of certain grizzly bear populations while establishing a new one. Separately, SCI offered support and suggestions to strengthen the new population management policy for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bear population. At the federal level, we also suggested several ways to improve the Service's proposed revisions to its policy for managing the National Wildlife Refuge System. Among other things, we expressed concern that the proposed revisions included a reduced role for public input in Refuge System planning.

In addition, SCI joined 26 other hunting and conservation organizations in a letter to the White House Council on Environmental Quality and Office of Management and Budget supporting funding efforts for wildlife migration corridors and seasonal ranges, particularly for big game species.

State: Among others, SCI submitted [comments](#) and issued an action alert to our members regarding the Tennessee River Bridge Feasibility Study in Northern Alabama and its potential impacts on access to and hunting within the Swan Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The letter requested that the Study consider potential negative impacts on Swan Creek, which includes nearly 9,000 acres of prime waterfowling, wildlife watching, target shooting, fishing, and more. SCI suggested alternative paths that would be less detrimental to the WMA. SCI also submitted a letter to the Governor requesting that he order the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to deny the Catalina Island Conservancy's permit application to eradicate all mule deer from Catalina Island and subsequently issued an action alert to California members. Finally, SCI joined with partner organizations in grassroots support and an official opposition letter opposing a proposed transfer of \$150 million from the Pennsylvania Game Fund; fortunately, this proposal was removed, marking a huge conservation victory.

International: SCI submitted a [comment](#) to Canada's federal wildlife management department protesting the proposed listing of the Eastern Wolf under the Species at Risk Act, Canada's version of the ESA. A listing would prohibit Eastern Wolf hunting on federal lands and likely would impact coyote hunting as well, due to similarity of appearance. No evidence suggests that the Eastern Wolf is declining in population; rather, the latest studies conclude that the total population is stable. Our letter points out that a threatened listing is unwarranted and would negatively impact hunting, including for coyotes and other species.



Protect & Improve Hunter Access and Education

Support for Congressional Efforts to Protect Hunting Access

SCI joined 20 other hunting and conservation organizations in a letter to the Chairs of the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry opposing a bill to establish a recreation area and wilderness in Indiana. This letter expresses significant concerns over changes to the management direction of this National Forest due to potential negative impacts to the habitat quality for a wide range of species.

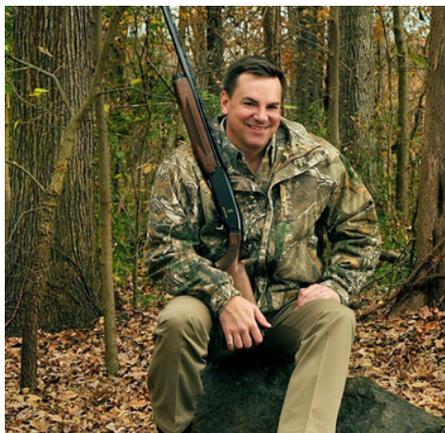


In December, SCI joined fellow hunting and conservation groups in a productive meeting with House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA-04). As an avid hunter and unwavering champion for sportsmen, Speaker Johnson welcomed our discussions on the most pressing issues facing the hunting community.

Celebrating SCI's Legislators of the Year:

SCI is honored to announce Rep. Richard Hudson (R-NC-09) as the recipient of SCI's 2024 Legislator of the Year Award. With this award, the conservation community recognizes Rep. Hudson as a steadfast defender of hunting freedoms and Second Amendment rights that are vital to outdoorsmen and women across the country. Rep. Hudson is a lifelong hunter and tireless champion for our freedoms and a steadfast defender against any and all assaults on our rights. We look forward to celebrating with Rep. Hudson and his family and staff during our 2024 Convention in Nashville! (Below, left).

SCI is also proud to announce Blaine Calkins, Member of Parliament (Canada), as our 2024 International Legislator of the Year award recipient. His unwavering commitment to safeguarding individual rights and preserving Canada's outdoor legacy has set him apart as a champion for hunting and conservation around the world. In his extensive career, Calkins has emerged as a dedicated advocate for hunters, anglers, trappers, and firearm owners, confronting legislative challenges that pose a threat to the sporting lifestyle. (Below, right).



Protect & Improve Hunter Access and Education

Championing Access to Hunter Education

In the Courts: In September, SCI, along with Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation and SCI's West Michigan Bowhunters Chapter, challenged a Department of Education policy that prohibited the use of federal funds for archery, shooting sports, and hunter education programs in elementary and secondary schools, based on the Department's misinterpretation of federal law. Congress then passed the Protecting Hunting Heritage and Education Act, a bill that SCI supported, to amend the law and correct the Department's misinterpretation. The House vote was 424-1 and the Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent. Through our suit, SCI confirmed that the Department had changed its policy to conform to the Protecting Hunting Heritage and Education Act and had communicated this change to Department personnel to share with schools. This suit and legislative advocacy represent a huge victory for protecting hunting heritage and shooting sports in schools, and giving children access to archery programs that have been proven to build self-esteem.



**PROTECTING HUNTING HERITAGE
AND EDUCATION ACT SIGNED!**



In the States: On the state side, SCI submitted a [letter](#) in support of Senate Bill 664, a bipartisan bill that would create an elective program for Michigan school districts to host hunter and firearms safety programs within their schools.

In the Field: SCI also directly provided hunter education through our DC Office, the "Hunters' Embassy." On November 14, SCI partnered with Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH-05) to host a hunter education course in the Armand and Mary Brachman SCI Advocacy Center. Rep. Latta has been an instructor for decades and shares SCI's passion for preserving hunting education and for spreading it to Congressional staffers that deal with legislation affecting all hunters. We thank Congressman Latta for his time and his passion for education.



Promote Science-Based Wildlife Management

Victory for Leopard Imports

SCI's Legal Advocacy team chalked up a big win for science-based management and international hunting this quarter. On October 2, the federal district court in Arizona dismissed a suit by anti-hunting organizations to overturn permits issued for the import of sport-hunted leopards. SCI was the only organization to intervene to defend the permits—many of which were issued to SCI members or involved hunts guided by SCI members. Based largely on SCI's arguments, the court held that the plaintiffs do not have legal standing to challenge the permits. The decision means the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can continue to issue import permits for leopards, without interference by radical groups that would rather see leopards lose habitat and decline in numbers than be sustainably hunted.

Continuing Our Efforts for Louisiana Black Bear Hunting

SCI promotes a proposed hunting season for black bear in Louisiana as one example of science-based management. Since 2019, SCI has defended the delisting of the Louisiana black bear from the ESA threatened species list, including the successful defense of a lawsuit challenging the delisting. In November, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission approved a Notice of Intent to open a conservative black bear hunting season in one bear management zone to help address increasing conflicts and an expanding bear population. SCI strongly supported that proposal. SCI Acadiana Chapter President Richard Kennedy and SCI Regional Rep Steve Caldwell, as well as SCIF Large Carnivore Program Manager Maria Davidson, spoke in favor of the proposed season. SCI will submit final comments on the Notice of Intent in February.

Opposing Ballot Box Biology in Colorado

Two ballot measures have been filed to ban “trophy hunting” of mountain lions, bobcats, and lynx in Colorado. The measures are misleadingly phrased, defining “trophy hunting” as all hunting and trapping, with specific reference to hunting mountain lions with dogs. SCI is part of a coalition opposing these proposed measures, working with like-minded groups and our own local Chapters. So far, our efforts forced the proponents to remove misleading language in the first initiative.

Supporting Wolf Management in Wisconsin

SCI sent a [letter](#) of support in Wisconsin for two bills that would require the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to establish a statewide population goal in the revised wolf management plan. The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board recently approved this revised plan and an administrative rule for wolves, but the plan failed to include an explicit population goal.

Facilitating Trophy Imports from Successful Conservation Programs

SCI remains the leader in promoting international trade in hunting trophies from successful conservation programs. As we continually remind regulators, most of the world's elephant, lion, leopard, rhino, giraffe, argali, and other listed species inhabit the countries where they are hunted. SCI's Advocacy team regularly meets with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff to provide the best available information about these programs and the benefits that hunting generates for habitat, wildlife, and community livelihoods, and encourage the Service to issue import permits from well-managed conservation hunting programs.

Stop Government Overreach of Wildlife Management

Combat Trophy Import Restrictions

Canada: Politically motivated and emotionally driven trophy import bans continue to threaten sensible, sustainable use of wildlife. In November, Canada enacted an elephant ivory and rhino horn import ban. SCI opposed this ban in two rounds of [public comments](#) containing extensive, empirical data about the benefits of hunting—including submission of the documented fact that the African nations who rely on hunting as a conservation tool protect over 80% of the world's African elephants, 70% of black rhinos, and 90% of white rhinos. Our letters also pointed out that banning lawful imports has negative consequences, as demonstrated by empirical research from Canada itself, which has opposed import restrictions by other countries on species like polar bear and seal. SCI, our partner organizations, and range states will work tirelessly to oppose this unsupported ban.

United Kingdom: In the UK, a bill that would have banned the import of “trophies” of thousands of species (including non-hunted genus like plants, corals, and insects) failed when common sense prevailed in the House of Lords. But that failure has not stopped anti-hunting campaigners from pledging to renew the ban. A Member of Parliament has already reintroduced a similar bill that would prohibit the import of hunting trophies. It remains unclear whether the UK Government will give the bill enough time for full consideration to make it through both chambers during the current Parliamentary session.

France: In France, a bill that would prohibit the import of hunting trophies of many different species (including elephant, lion, rhino, argali, and even mountain lion) was recently introduced and co-signed by 26 Members of Parliament. The bill would also ban the promotion or advertising of hunting for these species. SCI regularly collaborates with its partners to fight against import ban efforts around the world, including Europe, and will continue to work to defeat misguided and ill-conceived trophy import bans wherever they occur.

Protect Access to Hunting Firearms

Victory in Oregon and California! SCI and our colleagues at Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation challenged an overbroad law that restricted the marketing of firearms in a “manner attractive to minors,” that impacted our ability to promote youth hunting and to advertise firearms in our publications or through raffles at Chapter events. A California federal district court declined to enjoin enforcement of the law, but the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed. The Ninth Circuit found that the law violated SCI's rights to truthful commercial speech under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and declared the law unconstitutional and unenforceable.

Similarly, in Oregon, a state court judge ruled that Measure 114 is unconstitutional. SCI had previously led a coalition of conservation groups in submitting an amicus brief opposing this measure, which requires a permit to purchase any firearm and prohibits magazines with a capacity greater than 10 rounds, in a related suit.

Massachusetts: SCI joined seven other hunting and conservation organizations in opposing legislation that proposes to unnecessarily overhaul the state's firearms laws and implement restrictions that will reduce management and conservation funding, eliminate access to certain private lands for hunting with a firearm, and obstruct Recruiting, Retention, and Reactivation efforts within the sporting community.

Collaborate with Global Communities, Wildlife Authorities, and Other Stakeholders Pursuing Wildlife Stewardship

Fighting for Sustainable Use through Participation in National and International Meetings

AFWA 2023: Wildlife directors and professionals from across North America gathered in Calgary, Alberta during the week of September 24th for the 113th Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting, hosted by the Alberta Ministry of Forestry and Parks. SCI's Advocacy team attended to represent our membership and engage on conservation and hunting issues. SCI presented during the Sustainable Use and Legal Committees. We also met with wildlife regulators and other stakeholders to discuss important issues like the use of traditional lead ammunition, research-based decision-making, and cross-border wildlife management.

AWCF: In October, SCI's Advocacy team attended the 21st annual African Wildlife Consultative Forum, a signature program of the SCI Foundation which brings together government, hunting, community, and NGO stakeholders from across southern Africa to discuss critical issues facing the sustainable use community. Participants discussed and reached common ground on issues of shared interest including trophy imports, CITES, regulation of the hunting industry, and anti-poaching. The Forum was held in Windhoek, Namibia. SCI and the SCI Foundation extend a sincere thank you to the Namibian government, communities, and associations, particularly the Namibia Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, the Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations, and the Namibia Professional Hunting Association as we look forward to our continued partnership in conservation. (Below).

CITES SC77: SCI and partner organizations attended the 77th CITES Standing Committee meeting in Geneva in early November. The agenda was relatively light on issues involving game species—a boon for SCI and its partners, as sustainable use conservation programs do better with less CITES regulation and focus. SCI and the SCI Foundation will continue their decades-long participation in CITES meetings at the next Animals Committee meeting, currently scheduled for July 2024.



Collaborate with Global Communities, Wildlife Authorities, and Other Stakeholders Pursuing Wildlife Stewardship

APHA: In early December, SCI's Advocacy team attended the Alaskan Professional Hunters Association annual meeting. We closely monitor issues affecting hunting in Alaska, which is home to SCI's largest chapter and a bucket-list destination for many SCI members.

NASC: In early December, SCI's Advocacy team also attended the National Assembly of State Caucuses in Dewey Beach, Delaware. NASC is the only state legislative conference in the country focused on hunting, fishing, and natural resource issues, with legislators from at least 25 states attending. SCI was a title sponsor yet again, and hosted a dinner in which SCI's Advocacy team presented to attendees on our advocacy efforts, and explained that SCI is always ready, willing, and able to step in to defend science-based wildlife management and the hunters' way of life.



Supporting the FACE Manifesto on Hunting and Wildlife

In November, SCI partner the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE) launched its manifesto for the 2024 European Elections. FACE represents 7 million hunters from across Europe and comprises 37 national hunting associations. FACE encourages Candidate Members of the European Parliament to sign the manifesto to express their support for a workable and evidence-based approach to policymaking for hunting and conservation.

Making U.S. Dollars Work for International Conservation

In October, Executive Vice President Ben Cassidy appeared before the House Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries to testify on H.R. 5009, the WILD Act, which would reauthorize the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and the programs that make up the Multinational Species Conservation Fund through fiscal year 2028. These programs provide federal grants for elephant and rhino conservation in the wild, among other things. While strongly supporting the bill, Ben's testimony focused on areas of improvement for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant programs and encouraged greater collaboration on community-based conservation. SCI was able to amplify Ben's message by answering follow-up questions for the record from Committee Chair Bentz (R-OR).



Champion the Hunters' Lifestyle

Growing the Team

SCI is delighted to announce the hiring of Tia Senenfelder as our Director of Marketing and Communications. In this role she oversees all internal and external communications in media, print, and digital. A hunter and long-time SCI Member, we are excited to welcome her to the team!

Expanding our Social Media Following

In the last quarter, SCI's social media platforms have continued to grow with constant advocacy communications and membership and convention marketing. On Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, SCI's audience grew by 1.1% to 234,394 followers. In total, 2,642 followers representing an increase of 60% from last quarter's growth were gained across all platforms. SCI's social media accounts made 292 posts, reaching over 4.3 million impressions and engaging with 142,531 accounts. The biggest growth was on SCI's Facebook page. On YouTube, SCI hit 70,000 subscribers! We are only 5,000 subscribers away from our 2024 goal. Our channel received over 1.4 million views and gained more than 4,200 followers in the last quarter.

Encouraging Greater Participation from Women

SCI's Women Go Hunting (WGH) initiative kicked into high gear this quarter while initiating its "100 Woman Challenge." The challenge was designed to encourage women to enter their trophies into SCI's Record Book program. Running from October to the end of the year, women entered nearly 200 trophies by mid-December, and the Record Book Department was still processing entries. Many participants entered trophies for the first time. Additionally, promotions ran for the WGH Convention booth, Women Hunters Sweepstakes, and Mix & Mingle event. Further, we have invited women hunters to attend Convention through monthly articles in Safari Times, the WGH Facebook page, the Convention app, and promotions by SCI influencers and ambassadors. We expect to hit our goal of 500 women attending the Mix & Mingle event on the last day of Convention. Visit safariclub.org/womengohunting/ for more info!

Marketing Nashville Convention 2024

Our marketing machine is ramping up for SCI's annual Convention in Nashville, Tennessee! Bringing together like-minded hunters, guides, outfitters, conservationists, and hunting celebrities, the Convention is the Ultimate Sportsman's Market. In addition to the show floor, we are hosting a 3D archery shoot, world-class hunting seminars, a women hunters Mix & Mingle, daily auctions, and much more. The Convention also celebrates the Nashville music scene with live entertainment each night: Big & Rich, 38 Special, Foreigner, and Mitchell TenPenny opening for our feature show, Jason Aldean! Be sure to look out for billboards across Nashville, listen for us on local radio, and stay tuned on social media for the latest updates, special features, and more. There is truly something for everyone at SCI Convention, and the best part is connecting with your friends and other hunters. We hope to see you there - visit safariclub.org/2024-Convention/ for more info!





About SCI

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.