

H.R. 50, "MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUNDS REAUTHORIZATION ACT"; H.R. 1760, "GREAT APE CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION AMENDMENTS ACT"; & H.R. 1761, "MARINE TURTLE CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT"

LEGISLATIVE HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE,
OCEANS AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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Thursday, July 28, 2011

U.S. House of Representatives

Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs

Committee on Natural Resources

Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:14 a.m. in Room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. John Fleming, [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Fleming, Young, Wittman, Sablan, Faleomavaega, Bordallo, Pierluisi, Hanabusa, Markey [ex officio]

Also present: Representative Miller.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN FLEMING, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

Mr. FLEMING. The Subcommittee will now come to order. The Chairman notes the presence of a quorum.

Good morning. Today the Subcommittee will receive testimony on three bills, H.R. 50, H.R. 1760 and H.R. 1761, which would extend five conservation programs to assist African and Asian elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, great apes and marine turtles.

Since the establishment of the first of these funds in 1988, the Congress has appropriated some \$90 million, which has attracted over \$185 million in private matching funds. Together these monies have been used by the Fish and Wildlife Service to finance some 1,805 conservation grants to various range states throughout the world.

In my invitation letter, I have asked each of our invited guests to respond to a fundamental question as to why Congress should continue to appropriate taxpayer money to these funds at a time when our national debt now exceeds \$14 trillion. This was not a rhetorical question, and I am hoping to get a good answer.

In addition, based on the numbers provided to me by the Fish and Wildlife Service, it is clear that private donations exceeded Federal appropriated funds by more than a two-to-one ratio. Why then is any Federal investment even necessary?

If these bills are to proceed through the legislative process, we must be able to adequately justify, especially to our new Members and to me, of course, why they should vote to allocate scarce Federal dollars to assist in the conservation of these international species. I understand that we are not talking about a huge sum of money but, nevertheless, in our current fiscal condition we must account for every dollar of taxpayer money. I look forward to hearing the testimony on these proposals.

I am now pleased to recognize our Ranking Democrat Member from the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Congressman Sablan, for any statement he would like to make.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fleming follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable John Fleming, Chairman,
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs**

Good morning, today, the Subcommittee will receive testimony on three bills, H.R. 50, H.R. 1760 and H.R. 1761 which would extend five conservation programs to assist African and Asian Elephants, Rhinoceros and Tigers, Great Apes and Marine Turtles.

Since the establishment of the first of these funds in 1988, the Congress has appropriated some \$90 million which has attracted over \$185 million in private matching funds. Together, these monies have been used by the Fish and Wildlife Service to finance some 1805 conservation grants to various range states throughout the world.

In my invitation letter, I have asked each of our invited witnesses to respond to a fundamental question as to why Congress should continue to appropriate taxpayer money to these Funds at a time when our national debt now exceeds \$14 trillion dollars. This was not a rhetorical question and I am hoping to get a good answer. In addition, based on the numbers provided to me by the Fish and Wildlife Service, it is clear that private donations exceeded federal appropriated funds by more than a 2-to-1 ratio. Why then is any federal investment necessary?

If these bills are to proceed through the legislative process, we must be able to adequately justify, especially to our new members and me, why they should vote to allocate scarce federal dollars to assist in the conservation of these international species. I understand that we are not talking about a huge sum of money but nevertheless in our current fiscal condition, we must account for every dollar of taxpayer money.

I would now like to recognize the Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee for any statement he would like to make at this time.

**STATEMENT OF HON. GREGORIO KILILI SABLAN, A DELEGATE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you very much, Chairman Fleming, and good morning, everyone. Charismatic wildlife like tigers, turtles and apes captivate the human imagination, sometimes in fear and sometimes in awe. These animals inspire an unmistakable connection between human beings and their environment.

Unfortunately, the expansion of our human footprint on this planet often collides with wildlife and their habitat. The result of this collision can be disastrous for the habitat, as well as wildlife populations.

Over a decade ago, Congress felt compelled to make a statement to the world that wildlife conservation is imperative and passed legislation to put Federal dollars behind that statement. The three bills we are considering today reauthorize programs with a proven track record of making our planet a better place for wildlife and to ensure future generations can enjoy these creatures.

I commend my colleagues, Congressman Young, Congressman Miller and Congressman Pierluisi, for their continued leadership in the conservation of the world's most charismatic wildlife. Reauthorizing the Multinational Species Conservation Fund provides critical technical and cost-sharing grant assistance to range countries to protect and conserve African elephants, Asian elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, great apes and marine turtles.

Through the Fund, Federal dollars are leveraged by awarding grants to projects with matching non-Federal contributions. Every Federal dollar invested in the Fund routinely leverages one to four times that amount in non-Federal matching contributions. Clearly, the Fund has a proven track record of efficiency and achievement.

With a modest investment, this fund has quite a list of accomplishments. For example, the Great Ape Conservation Act supports the work of important organizations like the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, which has operated the longest running gorilla conservation program in Rwanda.

The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act is responsible for bringing a rhino education camp to 60 schools in the median areas that have high quality black rhinoceros habitat. The same fund supports collaborative efforts to conserve Amur tiger habitat adjacent to the Russia-China border where the remaining population is estimated to be only 350 adult tigers.

And finally, the Marine Turtle Conservation Act supports a project monitoring and protecting hawksbill turtle nesting activity in the Pearl Cays in Nicaragua while simultaneously developing turtle-based ecotourism for the benefit of the local community.

I commend these efforts to protect these highly endangered species. I would like to thank the witnesses for coming to this hearing today, and I look forward to hearing more of the success stories and about the vital importance of the protection efforts of this wildlife during your testimonies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sablan follows:]

Statement of The Honorable Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs

Thank you, Chairman Fleming. Charismatic wildlife, like tigers, turtles, and apes, captivate the human imagination. Sometimes in fear and oftentimes in awe, these animals inspire an unmistakable connection between human beings and their environment.

Regrettably, the expansion of our human footprint on this planet often collides with wildlife and their habitat. The result of this collision can be disastrous for the habitat as well as wildlife populations. Over a decade ago Congress felt compelled to make a statement to the world that wildlife conservation is imperative and passed legislation to put federal dollars behind that statement. The three bills we are considering today reauthorize programs with a proven track record of making our planet a better place for wildlife and to ensure future generations can enjoy these creatures.

I commend my colleagues, Congressmen Young, Miller, and Pierluisi for their continued leadership in the conservation of the world's most charismatic wildlife. Reauthorizing the Multinational Species Conservation Fund provides critical technical and cost-sharing grant assistance to range countries to protect and conserve African Elephants, Asian Elephants, Rhinoceroses, Tigers, Great Apes, and Marine Turtles. Through the Fund, federal dollars are leveraged by awarding grants to projects with matching non-Federal contributions. Every Federal dollar invested in the Fund routinely leverages one to four times that amount in non-Federal matching contributions. Clearly, the Fund has a proven track record of efficiency and achievement.

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tions, like the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, which has operated the longest running gorilla conservation program in Rwanda. The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act is responsible for bringing a rhino education campaign to 60 schools in Namibian areas that have high quality black rhinoceros habitat. The same Fund supports collaborative efforts to conserve Amur tiger habitat adjacent to the Russia-China border, where the remaining population is estimated to be only 350 adult tigers. Finally, the Marine Turtle Conservation Act supports a project monitoring and protecting hawksbill turtle nesting activity in the Pearl Keys in Nicaragua, while simultaneously developing turtle-based ecotourism for the benefit of the local community.

I commend these efforts to protect these highly endangered species. I would like to thank the witnesses for coming to this hearing today and I look forward to hearing more of these success stories and about the vital importance of the Multi-national Species Conservation Fund during your testimonies.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman.

Based on the traditions of this Subcommittee, I would now like to recognize the former esteemed Chairman of this Committee and current Chairman of the Indian and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee, the distinguished gentleman from Alaska, Congressman Don Young, for any statement he would like to make on this bill.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DON YOUNG, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ALASKA**

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for scheduling this hearing on my bill, H.R. 50. This measure will extend the authority to approve the conservation grants under the African Elephant Conservation Act, the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act and the Asian Elephant Conservation Act.

In your invitation letter, as you said, you asked witnesses to explain to this Congress why we should continue to appropriate money, although our debt now exceeds \$14 trillion. This is a good question. I hope the witnesses today understand that this is very, very important legislation and will testify why we need the minor amount of money the Federal government puts into this program.

It is no exaggeration to suggest that without the grants, the populations of African and Asian elephants and rhinos and tigers would continue to decline. By investing a very small amount of U.S. taxpayer money, we have slowed that slide toward extinction.

In 1988, in a rare moment of agreement, representatives of the Humane Society of the United States and Safari Club International came together in support of legislation to try to stop the slaughter of African elephants. The result of that agreement was the African Elephant Conservation Act.

In the past 23 years, Congress has extended this law on four separate occasions. We have authorized \$120 million to conserve these species. In reality, however, we have appropriated slightly more than \$1 million a year. More importantly, though, this \$26 million has been matched by \$90 million in private funds.

The battle to save the African elephant really is far from over. In fact, the price of elephant ivory is now at \$700 a pound, and 100 elephants are poached every day in Africa. They are being killed for their ivory, which is financing the terrorist activities of many rebel groups, including those associated with al-Qaeda.

H.R. 50 also extends the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act, which was first enacted 17 years ago. Since that time, the Congress

has authorized \$170 million, appropriated \$21 million and funded 505 conservation grants to assist highly endangered rhinoceros and tigers. These taxpayer funds were matched by \$34 million in private matching money.

While these grants have been helpful in stabilizing the population of several subspecies of rhinoceros, sadly the future of wild tigers is increasingly bleak. In fact, the number of wild tigers has declined to as few as 3,000. It is essential to extend the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act because this fund is the only permanent source of money for these species, and it is a lifeline for the survival of the wild tigers.

Finally, my bill reauthorizes the Asian Elephant Conservation Act. During the past 14 years, the Congress has authorized \$75 million for the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund. However, just like the other two funds, significant private money has been raised. It is crucially important that we recognize that the funds also affect the great apes and marine sea turtles.

Like many of my colleagues, I am committed to reducing our staggering national debt. However, we are not going to accomplish that goal on the backs of these landmark species. By spending this small amount of money, we are contributing to local economies which helps to stabilize the governments, thereby minimizing potential national security costs for our taxpayers in the future.

There are a series of articles, Mr. Chairman, that go all the way back to when we introduced this bill, Mr. Miller and myself. We created some good legislation, but if we are to be involved and we give lots of assistance to the human side of it across Africa, maybe not enough in some areas, but the idea of this poaching that is going on now for very large, illegal people, many from Somalia that are supporting the terrorists against this country.

This is a worthwhile cause. It is a minor amount of money, and I know under this debt there are a lot of other areas we ought to be cutting. I urge the support of this legislation. I look forward to our witnesses today to see what they have to say and explain why these Federal dollars are extremely important.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the time, but thanks for listening to me.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Young follows:]

Statement of The Honorable Don Young, a Representative in Congress from the State of Alaska, on H.R. 50, The Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for scheduling this hearing on my bill, H.R. 50. This measure will extend the authority to approve conservation grants under the African Elephant Conservation Act, the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act and the Asian Elephant Conservation Act.

In your invitation letter, you asked our witnesses why this Congress should continue to appropriate money to these conservation funds at a time when our national debt exceeds \$14 trillion dollars. Mr. Chairman, that is a fair and appropriate question.

It is no exaggeration to suggest that without the grants, the populations of African and Asian elephants, rhinoceros and tigers would continue to decline. By investing a small amount of U.S. taxpayer money we have slowed their slide toward extinction.

In 1988, in a rare moment of agreement, representatives of the Humane Society of the United States and Safari Club International came together in support of legislation to try to stop the slaughter of African elephants. The result of that agreement was the African Elephant Conservation Act. In the past twenty three years,

Congress has extended this law on four separate occasions and we have authorized \$120 million to conserve this species. In reality, however, we have appropriated slightly more than \$1 million a year and, more importantly, this \$26 million has been matched by over \$90 million in private funds.

The battle to save the African elephant is far from over. In fact, the price of elephant ivory is now more than \$700 dollars a pound and 100 elephants are poached every day throughout Africa. They are being killed for their ivory which is financing the terrorist activities of many rebel groups including some associated with al-Qaeda.

H.R. 50 also extends the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act, which was first enacted 17 years ago. Since that time, the Congress has authorized \$170 million, appropriated \$21 million and funded 505 conservation grants to assist highly endangered rhinoceros and tigers. These taxpayer funds were matched by \$34 million in private matching money.

While these grants have been helpful in stabilizing the population of several subspecies of rhinoceros, sadly, the future of wild tigers is increasingly bleak. In fact, the number of wild tigers has declined to as few as 3,000. It is essential to extend the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act because this Fund is the only permanent source of money for these species and it is a lifeline for the survival of wild tigers.

Finally, my bill reauthorizes the Asian Elephant Conservation Act. During the past 14 years, the Congress has authorized \$75 million for the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund. However, just like the other two funds, significantly less has been actually appropriated. In fact, \$20 million has been allocated or about \$1.5 million per year. These funds were matched by \$19 million in privately raised money. Together, these funds allowed the Secretary of the Interior to finance 307 conservation grants in 16 range countries.

Under the terms of the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2011, these three conservation laws, which are strongly supported by nearly every hunting, conservation and animal rights organization, would be extended at existing funding levels for an additional five years. Each of these funds supports animals that are keystone—which means they are essential to the survival of hundreds of other species.

For many range nations, a small grant of \$25,000 represents the only hope they have of stopping heavily armed and organized poachers who are intent on killing the last African elephant, rhinoceros and tiger. These three laws have been extremely effective but the job of savings these species is not yet finished.

Some years ago, Speaker Newt Gingrich spoke in support of the African Elephant Conservation Act. In his remarks, he noted that: “This is a very small amount of money, but it is symbolically very important, and symbolically important in part for the signal it sends to people in Africa and Asia.”

I agree with the views of Speaker Gingrich and I am pleased that H.R. 2584, the Interior Appropriations bill, allocates \$7.8 million for these Funds and those affecting Great Apes and Marine Sea Turtles. Like many of my colleagues, I am committed to reducing our staggering national debt. However, we are not going to accomplish that goal on the backs of these landmark species. By spending this small amount of money, we are contributing to local economies which helps to stabilize governments thereby minimizing potential national security costs for our taxpayers in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman and thank the gentleman's efforts and commitment over the years for this.

Next the Chairman would like to recognize Mr. Markey, the gentleman from Massachusetts, for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. MARKEY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. Rhinos and tigers and apes, oh my. Rhinos and tigers and apes, oh my. Dorothy and the scarecrow and the tin man chanted a similar verse to each other when they entered the dark and creepy forest. They were calming their nerves from the fear of meeting wild animals.

Today we are not in the dark forest, but I am chanting because I am afraid we might not meet these wild animals. Currently one-quarter of the mammals in the world are at risk of extinction. We are in a place where we might live to see majestic wild animals disappear from our planet. That is why it is important to reauthorize the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, which provides technical and grant assistance to protect six charismatic species: Asian and African elephants, rhino, tigers, apes and marine turtles.

I commend my colleagues, former Chairman Miller, former Chairman Young, Congressman Pierluisi, for introducing legislation supporting the cost effective and valuable conservation of these rare and highly threatened species and for ensuring continued U.S. leadership and commitment in protecting, recovering and restoring wild animal populations in their native habitat.

Why should we care about these charismatic species? The population counts are enough to scare anyone. In the last 18 years, Sumatran rhinos declined to an estimated 300 individuals in Malaysia and Indonesia. Once abundant throughout Asia, wild tigers now number as few as 3,200 individuals who live in fragmented groups in protected forests, refuges and national parks. Recently discovered, only 300 Cross River gorillas remain between Nigeria and Cameroon.

Potentially more frightening than these numbers are the links between the rarity of these species and the global trade in illegal wildlife. Just earlier this week a ton of elephant ivory was seized from a Philadelphia art dealer, who faces a maximum sentence of 20 years if convicted for violating the Endangered Species Act. In total, this illicit economy is worth \$5 to \$20 billion annually and has been linked to organized crimes and drug trafficking internationally.

The Multinational Species Conservation Fund provides direct benefits to national security by encouraging alternative channels for diplomacy in conflict prone regions. Instead of trying to find our way back home like Dorothy and Ian Somerhalder's character in *Lost*, we should be on a quest to save these wild animals and their homes because in fact we have a responsibility to do more than just close our eyes and click our heels together. We have a responsibility to make sure that they are not lost from this earth. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Markey follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable Edward J. Markey, Ranking Member,
Committee on Natural Resources**

Rhinos and tigers and apes! Oh my!
Rhinos and tigers and apes! Oh my!

Dorothy, Scarecrow, and Tin Man chanted a similar verse to each other when they entered the dark and creepy forest. They were calming their nerves from the fear of meeting wild animals. Today, we are not in the dark forest, but I am chanting because I am afraid we might NOT meet these wild animals.

Currently, one quarter of the mammals in the world are at risk of extinction. We are in a place where we might live to see majestic wild animals disappear from our planet.

That is why it is important to reauthorize the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, which provides technical and grant assistance to protect six charismatic species—Asian and African elephants, rhino, tigers, apes and marine turtles. I commend my colleagues, Congressman Miller, Pierluisi, and Young for introducing legislation supporting the cost-effective and valuable conservation of these rare and high-

ly threatened species and for ensuring continued U.S. leadership and commitment in protecting, recovering, and restoring wild animal populations in their native habitat.

Why should we care about these charismatic species? The population counts are enough to scare anyone.

- In the last 18 years, Sumatran rhinos declined to an estimated 300 individuals remaining in Malaysia and Indonesia.
- Once abundant throughout Asia, wild tigers now number as few as 3,200 individuals who live in fragmented groups, in protected forests, refuges, and national parks.
- Recently discovered, only 300 Cross River gorillas remain between Nigeria and Cameroon.

Potentially more frightening than these numbers are the links between the rarity of these species and the global trade in illegal wildlife. Just earlier this week, a ton of elephant ivory was seized from a Philadelphia art dealer, who faces a maximum sentence of 20 years if convicted for violating the Endangered Species Act. In total, this illicit economy is worth \$5 to \$20 billion annually, and has been linked to organized crimes and drug trafficking internationally. The Multinational Species Conservation Fund provides direct benefits to national security by encouraging alternative channels for diplomacy in conflict-prone regions.

Instead of trying to find our way back home, like Dorothy and Ian Somerhalder's character in *Lost*, we should be on a quest to save these wild animals and their homes because, in fact, we have a responsibility to do more than just close our eyes and click our heels together. We have a responsibility to make sure they are not *Lost* from this earth.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman.

I would now like to recognize one of our Subcommittee colleagues, the gentleman from Puerto Rico, The Honorable Pedro Pierluisi, for any opening statement he would like to make on his bill, H.R. 1761.

**STATEMENT OF HON. PEDRO R. PIERLUISI, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM PUERTO RICO**

Mr. PIERLUISI. Thank you, Chairman Fleming. First I want to express my sincere gratitude to you and Ranking Member Sablan for scheduling this hearing today on the three multinational species conservation bills, including my bipartisan bill, H.R. 1761, the Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act.

I also thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting as a witness my constituent, Carlos Diez, a biologist for 17 years with the Government of Puerto Rico's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Resources. I thank the other witnesses for appearing today, including Teiko Saito for representing the dedicated employees of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Ian Somerhalder, who is a great champion for wildlife conservation.

Having survived for nearly 110 million years, marine turtles are among the world's oldest species. Marine turtles, like other majestic wildlife species that capture our hearts and imaginations, are in peril. Once plentiful, six of the seven documented species of marine turtles are listed today as endangered, their survival threatened by various factors, including human exploitation and encroachment into their natural habitat.

Fortunately, we have in place a program at the Department of the Interior that supports partnerships and projects around the world to protect these species. This is because in 2004 in the face of declining marine turtle populations worldwide Congress enacted and President George Bush signed into law the Marine Turtle Conservation Act. This Act, which expired at the end of 2009, author-

ized the Fish and Wildlife Service to use a small amount of Federal funding to support conservation efforts aimed at saving these magnificent species.

Since 2005, the program has been highly successful. Hundreds of applications have competed for \$5.9 million in appropriated funds, which in turn helped secure an additional \$8.6 million in non-Federal funds, a remarkable return on investment. This program has served to position the United States as the world's leader in marine turtle conservation.

As Puerto Rico's representative in Congress, I have particularly keen interest in and special appreciation for marine turtles. At least four of the seven species of marine turtles are found in Puerto Rico's waters or nest on our beaches. These turtle species are the leatherback, the hawksbill, the green turtle and the loggerhead. Indeed, all of the coastal waters surrounding Culebra Island and Mona Island in Puerto Rico are designated as critical habitats by the Federal government.

Mindful of the difficult fiscal environment, the bill I have introduced would reauthorize this program from 2012 to 2017 at current funding levels. Importantly, the bill would amend existing law to allow the Fish and Wildlife Service to award grants for conservation projects within the United States and its territories, a power the agency does not presently possess.

This approach would ensure that Federal support is available to conserve the six species of marine turtles listed under the Endangered Species Act, all of which nest on U.S. beaches or are found in U.S. waters. I believe the survival of the species is important for its own sake and also because they are instrumental in ensuring the health of the ocean ecosystem.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman.

I would now like to ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from California, who is former Chairman of the Committee, Congressman George Miller, be allowed to join us on the dais and participate in the hearing. There being no objection, so ordered.

I recognize Mr. Miller for any opening statement he would like to make on this bill, H.R. 1760.

**STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE MILLER, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. MILLER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I am glad that Mr. Young didn't object. I appreciate it. Actually, Mr. Young and I have a long history of working together on a lot of issues before this Committee.

But thank you so much for this hearing, for taking the time of the Committee to make this inquiry on these three pieces of legislation. These are very important pieces of legislation. I think you are asking the right question at the right time about the use of our Federal resources, of our taxpayer dollars.

I think every taxpayer in America would be very proud to see the extent to which their dollars are leveraged in this program, the extent to which their dollars create the need for governments that would otherwise be reluctant to match our effort, to see what it

brings in the nonprofit world in terms of that leverage but, more importantly, the commitment that has been created over the years in countries that had no capacity, perhaps not very much concern in fact, about these magnificent species to now having programs of commitment there.

This is really sort of twofold. It provides a great opportunity for leverage, but it also is a great example of American leadership in a number of instances, in very troubled parts of the world where we speak to the needs of the people in those regions, in those countries, in those habitats, and are able to bring this kind of positive result.

I will also say that what this program does is it creates the atmosphere so some very, very brave people are willing to risk their personal well being, their lives in fact, to come forward and provide the protection for in the case of my legislation the great apes from being slaughtered either within warfare or within the poaching that Mr. Young talked about that attacks the elephants. These people pay a great price, but this is the program that gives them the organizational ability to join up.

I had the opportunity a number of years ago to spend a very, very early morning, like 3:00 in the morning, waiting to go out with some citizens of Kenya who were there to fight the poachers. As we sat and had some cups of tea and talked about their job, I asked them at one point as the sun was getting ready to come up. I said, "So what do you do when you find these poachers?" He said, "We shoot them." I was stunned. I said, "Why do you shoot them?" He said, "Because if they see us first, they will shoot us."

That is how serious this effort is. When you see an elephant—when you see an elephant, a healthy, mature elephant—lying on the ground that somebody has taken a chainsaw to its tusk, you realize how important this infrastructure is.

We know the impact of these species—the lions and the elephants and the apes and our turtles—on our children, and that is true of children across the world. This relatively small amount of money—I know we always get a little worried when we get disconnected from our districts to Washington on what is large and small expenditures.

This money creates the opportunity that the scientists and the program people will talk about today, and it also I think gives Congress an opportunity to every now and then go home and talk about our successes, which is hard to do sometimes, but this is a magnificent example of success under the American flag in some of the most troubled areas of the world.

So thank you so much for the opportunity to have my say and to also give the time over to this Committee to the consideration of the reauthorization of these programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman for his comments and again his commitment over the years as well.

Now we will begin to hear from our witnesses. Like all witnesses, your written testimony will appear in full in the hearing record, so I ask that you keep your oral statements to five minutes as outlined in our invitation letter to you and under Committee Rule 4[a].

Our microphones are not automatic, so please press the button when you are ready to begin. You have to sort of get close too. Sometimes they don't pick up well.

Let me explain how the timing light works. For the first four minutes you will have a green light, the last minute you will have a yellow light and then when it turns red we ask that you wrap up. We have a lot of witnesses today, so we certainly want to be judicious about our time.

Now I would like to welcome today's witnesses. First we have Ms. Teiko Saito, Assistant Director for International Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Mr. Ian Somerhalder, an actor and founder of the Ian Somerhalder Foundation, who will be representing the Multinational Species Conservation Coalition and, as I understand it, from my own backyard in Louisiana, Covington. Welcome.

Dr. John Robinson, Executive Vice President, Conservation Science, Wildlife Conservation Society; Dr. Tara Stoinski representing Zoo Atlanta and the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International; Mr. Carlos Diez, National Coordinator, Marine Turtle Project Program, Puerto Rico Natural Resources Agency; and Mr. Joseph Hosmer—am I saying that right, sir—President, Safari Club International Foundation.

Ms. Saito, you are now recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF TEIKO SAITO, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ms. SAITO. Good morning, Chairman Fleming and Members of the Subcommittee. I am Teiko Saito, Assistant Director for International Affairs of the Fish and Wildlife Service within the Department of the Interior. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.R. 50, H.R. 1760 and H.R. 1761.

The Department strongly supports these bills, which would reauthorize the Multinational Species Funds. We greatly appreciate the Committee's continued leadership and support of international wildlife conservation.

The Multinational Species Conservation Fund provides critical support for the conservation of some of the world's rarest and threatened species in their natural habitats, including African and Asian elephants, rhinos, tigers, great apes and marine turtles. These species are ecologically important and aesthetically invaluable to Americans and people around the world. These conservation funds represent the United States' commitment to conserving these awesome species in the wild.

All of the animals I mentioned face numerous threats, including poaching and habitat loss. The grant programs established through the Multinational Species Conservation Funds provide technical assistance, cost-shared grants to range countries. These include helping range countries build law enforcement and management capacity, conducting conservation education, surveys, monitoring, protecting habitat, conducting essential applied research and providing economic incentives for conservation.

These conservation funds are the foundations for hundreds of projects around the world that address the needs of highly endangered species, and they provide focus and efficient support. From

2006 through 2010 collectively, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds have supported 967 projects with \$53.6 million in grant funding and \$84.6 million in matching contributions from our dedicated partners. From 2006 to 2010, the funds leveraged significant matching resources, achieving a 1.6 match for every dollar spent.

These conservation funds are an effective instrument to provide immediate and long range benefits for the conservation of these special species. In many cases, this is the only government dedicated funding for these species. The funds often initiate important projects that otherwise would not get off the ground, encouraging the support of other donors. Their impact is increasing as they achieve significant matching resources from a growing list of outside partners. The funds help secure the interest and commitment of governments and communities around the world.

My written testimony highlights many examples of the importance of this funding for the survival of these keystone species, and I will briefly mention a couple of them. Prior to support from the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund, about 25 percent of the Cape Verde loggerhead females were killed each year due to poaching. Support through the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund stopped virtually all non-natural deaths by supporting a coalition of three non-government organizations to work with local municipalities and national governments to reduce poaching.

Another example involves the Rhino and Tiger Conservation Fund. This fund provided rhino protection units. These are law enforcement units which have been able to stop poachers from returning to protected areas. Given the value of rhino horns on the international market, it is estimated that the 200 rhinos remaining in Sumatra would be killed within five years and the 40 rhinos remaining in Java would be killed within one year without the enforcement resources provided by the Rhino and Tiger Conservation Fund. The rhino protection units in Sumatra also help protect Asian elephants there.

Mr. Chairman and Subcommittee Members, thank you again for the opportunity to testify. We really greatly appreciate your leadership in the conservation of these rare, globally important species and look forward to working with you as you continue to consider these bills.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Saito follows:]

Statement of Teiko Saito, Assistant Director for International Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, on H.R. 50, The Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2011; H.R. 1760, The Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2011; and H.R. 1761, The Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2011

Chairman Fleming and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Teiko Saito, Assistant Director for International Affairs for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Department of the Interior (Department).

The Department appreciates this opportunity to testify on H.R. 50, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2011; H.R. 1761, the Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2011; H.R. 1760, the Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2011; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) implementation of these international conservation Acts.

The Department strongly supports these bills, and we greatly appreciate the Subcommittee's continued leadership in international conservation. The Service has a

long history of proactively addressing international wildlife species conservation. We work with private citizens, local communities, state and federal agencies, foreign governments, native peoples, and nongovernmental organizations to promote coordinated domestic and international strategies to protect, restore, and enhance wildlife and habitats. The Service is the agency charged with implementing the United States' obligations under several international conservation treaties, including the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, the Convention on Nature Protection and Wild Life Preservation in the Western Hemisphere, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Technical expertise and an on-the-ground presence through international agreements and other programs give the Service a unique role in conserving species and habitats around the world. The Multinational Species Conservation Funds (MSCFs) support the conservation of some of the world's rarest and most threatened species in their natural habitats, including the African elephant and Asian elephant, as well as rhinoceros, tigers, great apes, and marine turtles.

The grant programs established through these Acts provide technical and cost-sharing grant assistance to range countries for species conservation and as such are a key element of the Service's Wildlife Without Borders-Species programs. These Acts represent the nation's commitment to help support conservation of rare and highly threatened species in the wild. In many cases, this is the only government dedicated funding for these particular species. The MSCFs provide opportunity for projects that otherwise would not get off the ground, encouraging other donors to support innovative and effective conservation efforts. They achieve significant leveraging of funds from a growing list of outside partners, which has greatly increased the impact of these grant programs. With a modest investment, the MSCFs are able to promote unprecedented achievements in the conservation of elephants, rhinos, tigers, great apes, and marine turtles. The funds help secure the interest and commitment of governments and communities around the world.

H.R. 50, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2011

The Service strongly supports H.R. 50, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2011, which reauthorizes the three longest-running Multinational Species Conservation Acts: the African Elephant Conservation Act, the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act, and the Asian Elephant Conservation Act.

The African Elephant Conservation Act

African elephant populations are threatened by poaching, loss of habitat, and conflicts with humans. In the late 1970s, when elephant populations were thought to number about 1.3 million, the value of ivory skyrocketed in international markets from \$7.50 per kilogram to over \$400 per kilogram. This upsurge in ivory trafficking is believed to have cut Africa's elephant population in half. In 1989, the species was listed as Appendix I of CITES, making it illegal to trade in elephants or ivory commercially. Since then, populations have stabilized or recovered in a few southern African countries, but continued to decline in others.

A new onslaught of poaching threatens elephants in some areas, while in others, elephants are increasingly coming into conflict with growing human settlements and farms. Most countries supporting wild populations of elephants are struggling to conserve them. Commercial poaching for meat and ivory, combined with instability from political conflict and civil war, have devastated many elephant populations, particularly in forest habitat of Central Africa. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), home to an estimated 112,000 elephants in 1992, is now feared to have only six populations of little more than 500 elephants. Vast areas that were occupied by elephants as recently as a decade ago are now devoid of these forest giants. The current continental population of savannah and forest elephants is estimated to be 500,000 to 600,000, but these increasing threats cloud the future of African elephant populations.

The African Elephant Conservation Act, authorized by Congress in 1988, created the African Elephant Conservation Fund (AfECF), which plays a critical role in assisting range countries to conserve and manage elephants and their habitats. From 2006 through 2010, the AfECF supported 138 projects with \$8.2 million in grant funding and \$22.2 million in matching contributions from partners and collaborators. Projects funded include assisting range countries to build law enforcement and management capacity, mitigating human-elephant conflict, conducting conservation education, conducting surveys and monitoring, establishing corridors, and conducting essential applied research.

For example, with this funding, the local wildlife authority in the DRC has been able to build patrol posts and train and equip rangers in and around Okapi Faunal Reserve and Virunga National Park. Trained officers have improved relations with local residents, removed thousands of snares, disarmed militias, and disbanded illegal bushmeat and charcoal operations in the protected areas.

In other areas, such as in southern Africa, the elephants in protected areas are increasingly surrounded by human settlements and are becoming isolated, stressing the vegetation upon which elephants and other wildlife depend. Elephants moving through human settlements and farms come into conflict with humans trying to protect their homes and crops. Farmers may lose their crops, resulting in lost income, and they may even lose their lives when they attempt to defend their fields. Elephants may suffer debilitating injuries and are often killed in retaliation for raiding crops.

The AfEFCF has supported research in Amboseli National Park in southern Kenya where agriculture is rapidly encroaching on elephant range. Support from the Fund allowed for collaboration between Duke University and the Amboseli Elephant Research Project to interpret crop raiding behavior to determine how such behavior begins and whether it is more common in related individuals or is influenced by other life history traits and social characteristics. This research will provide information crucial to understanding and managing human-elephant conflict.

The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act

Rhino and tiger populations are particularly targeted by poachers because their body parts are in high demand on the global black market. Tiger organs and bones and rhino horns are used in Asian medicines and sold to consumers who believe these animal products convey strength, health, and virility. Rhino horns are also carved for dagger handles as a coveted status symbol in the Middle East.

The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act, authorized by Congress in 1994, has greatly assisted efforts to conserve the five rhino species (African and Asian) and five extant wild tiger sub-species. This is the only government-sponsored dedicated funding source for conservation of wild tigers in the world. From 2006 through 2010, the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund (RTCF) supported 228 projects with \$10.6 million in grant funding, and \$18 million in matching contributions from partners and collaborators. A variety of projects have been funded, including surveys, conservation education, law enforcement, habitat protection, and capacity building.

In Africa, there are two rhinoceros species: black rhinos and white rhinos. At one time, there were, among the black and white rhino species, five total subspecies. In the last ten years, two African rhino subspecies have gone extinct in the wild. Before 1900, Africa had more than one million rhinos, and they occurred in most sub-Saharan countries. But, by the 1990s, rhinos were extinct in many range states. Only 2,300 black rhinos and fewer than 10,000 white rhinos survived. Today, through support from the RTCF and tremendous dedication and sacrifice by our partners in Africa, black rhinos have slowly begun to recover, with a current population of more than 4,800. White rhinos are also recovering and now number more than 20,000, but a recent upsurge in rhino poaching threatens to undermine years of progress.

Through the RTCF, the Service provides critical support to increase the capacity of park guards and wildlife management authorities to address poaching and other threats to rhinos in Africa. The RTCF provided infrastructure, training, and logistical support for the reintroduction of black rhinos to North Luangwa National Park in Zambia and to augment populations of rhinos in Serengeti and Mkomazi in Tanzania and at conservancies in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa. Funds are continually needed to keep rhino populations safe throughout their remaining range.

Asia supports three rhino species: the Indian rhino (or greater one-horned rhino), the Sumatran rhino, and the Javan rhino. The Sumatran and Javan rhinos in Southeast Asia are the most endangered, with only 200 and between 37–45 remaining, respectively. Strict protections, coupled with significant support from the RTCF and its partners, has increased numbers of the Indian rhino from fewer than 200 early in the 20th century to an estimated 2,850 today.

The RTCF is strengthening our partners that work with wildlife authorities in Nepal, as well as the police and the army, to assist in the identification and arrest of the poachers who have so badly damaged the country's rhino population in recent years. In Indonesia, the RTCF has partnered with the Indonesian Forest Department and a non-government organization in support of highly effective, critically needed, anti-poaching patrols that protect Sumatran and Javan rhinos. These projects will increase rhino protection and law enforcement, reducing poaching of the most endangered rhino species in the world.

Wild tigers, once abundant throughout Asia, now live in small fragmented groups, mostly in protected forests, refuges, and national parks. In general these populations are in decline. Tigers now occupy only 7 percent of their historic range and 40 percent less habitat than 10 years ago. Recent surveys indicate the South China tiger may have become extinct in the wild, with only 47 remaining in China's zoos.

There are many threats to the survival of wild tigers in addition to poaching including habitat destruction, loss of prey, and conflicts with human settlements. Experts estimate that more than 500 tigers are killed each year across their range. The illegal trade in tiger skins and in tiger bones for health tonics has resulted in the total loss of tiger populations in places such as India's Sariska Tiger Reserve. In addition to poaching-for-profit, tigers are killed by local villagers who fear attacks on humans or livestock. As human populations expand further into the habitats of wild animals, the resulting conflict poses a serious threat to both human and animal safety.

The RTCF has supported projects throughout Asia aimed at conserving and protecting tigers and their habitat by building the capacity of poaching response teams and educating people living near tiger areas. For example, the critically endangered subspecies, the Russian "Amur" tiger, has been the focus of a successful, long-term anti-poaching campaign through the Phoenix Fund. With the RTCF's support, the campaign and associated annual tiger festivals reached thousands in Vladivostok and other cities throughout Russian province, Primorskii Krai. Grants have supported the development of curricula for hundreds of classrooms in the Krai, to teach students at all levels about tiger biology and conservation. A recent grant award funded a "Teachers for Tigers" manual that will increase the effectiveness of tiger conservation education efforts.

In November 2010, the U.S. government attended the International Forum on Tiger Conservation in St. Petersburg, Russia, and endorsed the goal of doubling the number of tigers in the wild by 2022. Fulfilling that goal will take continued financial commitment from the U.S. and other international funding sources.

The Asian Elephant Conservation Act

Large herds of elephants once roamed freely throughout the forests and savannas of Asia. Today, fewer than 40,000 Asian elephants exist in the wild, half of these in India. Habitat loss, poaching and human-elephant conflicts are the largest threat to the survival of these animals in the wild.

The Asian Elephant Conservation Act, authorized by Congress in 1997, has greatly enhanced the conservation status of the Asian elephant. The Act supports the efforts of a wide range of partners to train wildlife professionals, improve law enforcement capacity, mitigate human-elephant conflict, establish community development programs, undertake applied research, raise awareness of elephant conservation issues, provide education programs, establish elephant corridors that minimize habitat fragmentation, and support the ongoing efforts of the 13 range country governments to survey, monitor, and develop effective elephant management strategies. From 2006 through 2010, the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund (AsECF) supported 161 projects with \$8 million in grant funding and \$10.2 million in matching contributions from partners and collaborators.

Elephants require significant natural resources to survive. Mature bulls weigh as much as 11,000 pounds, and each elephant consumes more than 440 pounds of vegetation and 52 gallons of water every day. Each animal needs a "living space" of 80 square miles. Continued destruction of habitat and increased human settlement in areas previously occupied by elephants has resulted in rising incidents of crop-raiding and subsequent conflict with human communities. Similar to some African elephant populations, frequent raids by Asian elephants into agricultural fields, coupled with attempts by farmers to chase the animals away, often result in tragedy for both elephants and humans.

The AsECF is supporting the development of new approaches to manage crop-raiding. A community operated elephant early warning system is now assisting villagers to protect their crops, reducing human wildlife conflict in Sri Lankan villages. With funding from the AsECF, the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society has developed an elephant intrusion early warning system called "EleAlert". The system supports electric fences around communities to keep elephants *out* rather than fence them *in* national parks. The system is completely operated and maintained by local villagers and provides the community with an audible alarm when an elephant intrusion occurs. It is estimated that the early warning system will allow villagers to identify problem fencing areas and points of elephant intrusions, thus helping to reduce the amount of crop and property damage.

On the island of Sumatra in Indonesia, human-elephant conflict in previous decades led to the disappearance of at least nine populations of elephants. To ensure

the survival of the remaining three elephant populations, the AsECF is supporting a promising new strategy that incorporates a training program, community guards, alarm systems, and elephant deterrents in five target villages around Way Kambas National Park. In Sri Lanka, the AsECF supported a project to monitor elephant movement and behavior within Yala National park and surrounding lands to develop an appropriate buffer zone to mitigate human-elephant conflict outside the park. The results of the project have not only yielded benefits for elephants and local communities in and around Yala National Park but are also changing the overall approach to elephant management in Sri Lanka.

Poaching also poses a serious threat to survival for all populations. In parts of India, the poaching of male tuskers is altering the male Asian elephant population to include mainly tusk-less males known as “mukhnas.” The loss of males in general and tusked males in particular has resulted in highly skewed sex ratios in many wild Asian elephant populations. Tusks are very important behaviorally in dominance hierarchy, to attract mates, to fend off predators, to be used as a tool for digging and peeling bark. The AsECF provides support for law enforcement across the range countries especially in protected areas to prevent poaching for ivory and other products. This fund is working with the Forest Department law enforcement authorities in northeast India to protect Asian elephants in this important area for Asian elephants. The AsECF is also supporting law enforcement and protection for Asian elephants in Sumatra, Thailand, and Malaysia. The AsECF provided significant support for the Management Information System program, which is being used by many SE Asian countries to monitor their law enforcement effort.

Through all of the MSCFs discussed above, the Service has implemented a streamlined process that allows for timely approval of projects and quick response to emergency situations. Each project funded is a cooperative effort with foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, or private sector entities. No in-country project is approved unless it has the full support of in-country government officials, and has been identified as a project that will address the country’s conservation priorities. Funding is delivered to the field rapidly and efficiently to target the most critical conservation needs. To implement these programs, the Service works with conservation partners within the U.S. and the range countries. These collaborators have vast on-the-ground experience and are experts on the ecology of the species as well as the human dimensions of conservation.

H.R. 1760, the Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2011

The Service strongly supports H.R. 1760, the Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2011, which leverages conservation actions to conserve more than 20 species of apes in Africa and Asia. The Great Ape Conservation Act (Act) was authorized by Congress in 2000 and created the Great Ape Conservation Fund (GACF) to assist efforts to conserve gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos in Africa, and orangutans and gibbons in Asia. H.R. 1760 would support great ape conservation by increasing the capacity of foreign governments, wildlife managers, local communities, and other organizations to address primary threats to the great apes, including habitat loss, illegal hunting, and the illegal pet trade.

The GACF provides financial and technical support for a variety of projects and efforts. These include building institutional and human resource capacity, improving law enforcement, educating local communities about conservation issues, and providing economic incentives for conservation. In addition, GACF provides support for collecting key scientific data on ape species that are greatly needed to achieve ape conservation. This includes research related to distribution, population status, and infectious diseases. From 2006 through 2010, the GACF supported 293 projects with \$21.2 million in grant funding (also including funding transferred from the U.S. Agency for International Development Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment) to the GACF, and \$25.8 million in matching contributions from partners and collaborators. Much of the success of the GACF is due to its direct and coordinated support of on-the-ground conservation projects in Africa and Asia. In Africa, the two countries containing 75 percent of the gorilla population, the Republic of Congo and Gabon, experienced more than a 50 percent reduction in the gorilla population between 1983–2000. As a result, identifying and protecting the last great areas of significant great ape conservation interest is a priority under the Great Ape Conservation Act.

For example, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), a partner in the Republic of Congo, was awarded several small grants over a period of six years to determine gorilla status in the country. Surveys and other research done by their field teams produced an encouraging estimate of 125,000 western lowland gorillas in a vast area known as the ‘green abyss.’ While this area was known as having significant poten-

tial to hold populations of gorillas and other wildlife, until the forests were studied, no one realized the potential of this and other large areas of intact forest to the conservation of great apes. There are numerous other such places that need surveys and, more importantly, immediate and effective conservation projects on the ground.

In Asia, the wild population of orangutans is estimated at 50,000 to 60,000 individuals. Orangutans are critically endangered due to habitat loss from logging, peat land drainage, and a rapid expansion in palm oil plantations. Orangutans are killed for meat, medicinal purposes, and for raiding agricultural fields, while infants are taken for the pet trade. Left unchecked, such factors will lead to extinction. The GACF is strengthening conservation of both orangutans and gibbons, tackling many similar threats and population declines.

An innovative ongoing project in Indonesia's Gunung Palung National Park aims to incentivize the protection of critical orangutan habitat from illegal logging by providing healthcare benefits to communities that engage in reforestation efforts and organic farming. The GACF is supporting partner Health and Harmony in these efforts. The project not only directly benefits orangutans but also provides conservation-related livelihoods and healthcare to villagers in need, as well as critical field training for Indonesian medical practitioners. Grant funding has directly supported a conservation education room for local villagers, maps of degraded areas, a seedling nursery and an economically sustainable reforestation program. More than 20 villages are now participating in the program and are working to protect the orangutan's habitat.

Perhaps the greatest threat to gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos in Africa, and to a lesser degree, orangutans and gibbons in Southeast Asia, is the illegal trade in bushmeat. Although apes comprise a small proportion of bushmeat production, poachers target them as their meat commands a premium price. Scientists have linked the consumption of bushmeat from apes to human contraction of the Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever virus. In addition, there is convincing scientific evidence linking the origin of HIV/AIDS to the consumption of chimpanzee meat. The risk of viruses of Ebola and HIV/AIDS being transferred between species poses incalculable danger to humanity. Ape bushmeat, as a known vector of fatal viral infections between gorillas and people, is therefore one of the greatest dangers to both wildlife and people in Central Africa.

With support from the GACF, our partners such as the WCS's Global Health Program and the government of Congo conducted extensive field studies and established a rapid-response capacity in the event of further outbreaks of the Ebola virus. Working with African health officials and local communities, they made significant strides to create a first line of defense against this devastating disease that severely threatens both apes and humans.

Section 2 of H.R. 1760 clarifies the Secretary's authority to issue multiyear grants, enabling the program to be more flexible in meeting the needs of grant recipients and allowing for increased capacity and stability to long-term projects in high priority areas. Overall, this provision will position the Service to better address the long-term threats facing ape populations throughout Africa and Asia. With regard to the requirement in Section 2 for a Panel of Experts, the Service has already taken steps to create such a panel. However, the creation and coordination of the panel will require resources above those committed to our existing responsibilities under the Great Ape Conservation Act.

H.R. 1761, the Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2011

The Service supports H.R. 1761, the Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act (MTCA) of 2011, with qualifications detailed in the comments below. This Act addresses some of the most urgent conservation issues regarding marine turtles. Marine turtles are "flagship species" for both local and international coastal conservation. Because marine turtles circumnavigate the world's oceans to reach their nesting beaches, their conservation must be addressed through global efforts. By focusing on these species and their habitats, we can more adequately conserve and manage ecologically critical coastal and marine habitats around the world.

Less than 60 years ago, marine turtles were abundant, and widespread nesting on beaches was common. Today however, six of the seven marine turtle species (Kemp's ridley, Olive ridley, Loggerhead, Leatherback, Hawksbill, and Green turtle) are listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). All seven species are included in Appendix 1 of CITES. Because they disperse and migrate throughout the world's oceans, they are important indicators of coastal and marine environmental health on local, regional, and global scales.

To recover depleted marine turtle populations, the Service has worked closely with countries supporting nesting beaches and with our sister federal agencies in sustained, long-term conservation efforts. For example, surveys of the Kemp's ridley

turtles on a nesting beach in northeastern Mexico showed a drop from more than 40,000 nesting females estimated on one day in 1947 to fewer than 270 nesting females for the entire nesting season in 1985. The Service has worked with the Mexican government since 1978 to support nest protection measures that were first implemented in Mexico in the late 1960s, and this, along with the implementation in the 1990s of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in commercial fishing, has reversed this downward trend. During the mid-1990s, surveys showed sustained increases in the number of recorded Kemp's ridley nests. In 2009 approximately 21,000 nests were recorded in Mexico.

The future sustainability of marine turtles remains uncertain, however. In addition to threats facing nesting beach habitat, marine turtle populations continue to be threatened by exploitation of eggs and turtles, trade in turtle parts, and bycatch mortality. And, overall, nesting populations for most species have declined worldwide, except for the nesting populations receiving long-term, sustained conservation, such as the U.S.-Mexico bi-national effort for Kemp's ridley turtles or the conservation of globally significant hawksbill nesting populations in Mona Island, Puerto Rico.

Since its enactment in 2004, the Marine Turtle Conservation Act has enabled the Service to support intensified nesting beach conservation on critical leatherback beaches in the Pacific in Mexico, Costa Rica, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. It is also playing a vital role in preventing a similar population crash of the West Africa leatherback nesting population. Based on an initiative in Gabon in 2005, the Service has helped organize governments and partners to work more closely together on nesting beaches, including nest protection on the key nesting beaches in Gabon and Congo subject to heavy exploitation. The Service has also helped establish community-based conservation programs with partners on remnant nesting populations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. From 2006 through 2010, the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund (MTCF) supported 147 projects with \$5.6 million in grant funding, and \$8.4 million in matching contributions from partners and collaborators.

The MTCF works with local communities to raise awareness and halt the harvest on nesting beaches. The nesting population of Hawksbill turtles on Chirqui Beach in Panama was once the largest in the Caribbean, but decades of poaching for their shells completely devastated this important nesting site. The MTCF provided support to the Sea Turtle Conservancy to conduct extensive community outreach, beach monitoring, and protection of the nesting hawksbills in an effort to help the population recover. Public outreach and engagement with the local Ngöbe Indian communities has been successful in reducing the poaching of nests and turtles on the beach, as well as reducing the capture of juvenile and adult turtles at sea by local fishermen. The project engages a broad coalition of partners from governments, communities, and NGOs, involving local communities, schools, and other stakeholders to build community support. The project has led to an impressive increase in the number of hawksbill nests over the last seven years and is now viewed as a model marine turtle conservation project.

H.R. 1761 would enable the Service to continue in its role as a provider of dedicated funding for comprehensive, global coordination and collaboration in developing countries where resources and capacity for marine turtle conservation are limited.

The Service recommends that the Subcommittee consider amending the bill's language authorizing the use of up to twenty percent of MTCA appropriations for domestic marine turtle conservation to instead authorize up to 20% of appropriated funds toward protecting freshwater turtles and tortoises worldwide.

While marine turtle conservation continues to be a critical conservation need, we also recognize that freshwater turtles and tortoises are severely imperiled. Among the more than 300 species of freshwater turtles worldwide, twenty-five percent are facing imminent peril or extinction in the next decade. By bringing a focus to these species and their habitats, H.R. 1761 would allow us to leverage funds and attention to ecologically critical areas of the planet that need to be considered and managed more adequately.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman and Subcommittee Members, thank you again for this opportunity to update the Subcommittee on the Service's implementation of these Multinational Species Conservation Funds. We greatly appreciate your interest and your leadership in the conservation of rare, globally important species, and we look forward to working with you as you continue to consider the bills heard before the Subcommittee today. The Multinational Species Conservation Acts have formed the foundation for hundreds of projects around the world to address the needs of highly endangered species. These Acts produce focused and efficient support for the conservation of species that are ecologically important and aesthetically invaluable to

Americans and people around the world. The Funds created by the Acts leverage significant matching resources, achieving a \$1.60 match for every \$1.00 spent from 2006 through 2010. We firmly believe that the Multinational Species Conservation Funds are the most effective instrument in existence to provide immediate and long-term benefits for the conservation of these species.

Mr. FLEMING. Thank you, Ms. Saito, for your testimony.

Now I recognize Mr. Ian Somerhalder, originally from Covington, as I said, and you now have, sir, five minutes.

**STATEMENT OF IAN SOMERHALDER, CELEBRITY SPOKESMAN,
MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND COALITION**

Mr. SOMERHALDER. Good morning, Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan and Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Ian Somerhalder. I am an actor and founder of the Ian Somerhalder Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering, educating and collaborating with people to help them positively impact the planet and its creatures. I am also a global Ambassador for the Alliance for Global Conservation.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you today on the legislation before us, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Subcommittee and especially Chairman Fleming, who represents my home State of Louisiana, for the invitation to join him today.

Environmental conservation has not just been a passion of mine, but a priority, and when I began to find through my work as an actor that I was gaining an increasingly prominent platform in front of the American public, I knew immediately what I needed to do. The IS Foundation is my attempt to use this opportunity to share the public's attention for the greater good.

The IS Foundation, which has dozens of affiliate groups around the world as far off as India and Algeria, focuses on three themes: habitat conservation, species protection, and green energy initiatives. Our goal is to support a range of projects from more established, mature initiatives like the Alliance for Global Conservation to smaller, grassroots efforts initiated by individuals on the Gulf Coast and many other local communities.

So the hope is that we can demonstrate ways for everyone to contribute on any scale, and we want to start conversations on these issues and allow them to grow and evolve naturally, so when a particular issue gathers enough momentum we will lend the resources needed to transform it from a conversation to a project, from a project into real progress.

But in talking to people, especially young people, around the country I have found time and time again that the issue of species conservation is a particularly resonant one, and people are very passionate. They are passionately attached to the creatures that have captured their attention and their imagination since childhood, and they are invested in doing whatever is necessary to protect them. Species conservation is beyond a doubt an issue that truly matters to the American public. We are lucky in this case because most of our beloved species are clinging to survival by a thread.

The legislation initially enacted in 1990 is viewed globally as a success story. With the U.S. leading the effort, governments around the world are able to begin investing in their ecosystems. From the Congo to Southern Sudan, we are finding that species conservation is paying off in terms of both the environment and local government action.

As Congress considers H.R. 50, I thought it would be useful quickly to discuss the species that benefit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leadership in conservation: Asian and African elephants, apes, the plight of tigers and rhinos, but in the consideration of time let me address the marine turtles as an example of the desperate plight and the important opportunity we have to take action and continue to strengthen our collective efforts. I addressed the full impact of the other species I mentioned in my written testimony submitted for the record.

Six of the seven marine turtle species are listed as threatened or endangered by the World Conservation Union and under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Because marine turtles take 10 to 40 years to reach sexual maturity, they are vulnerable to predators, oil spills and bycatch, so restoring their numbers is a lengthy and very delicate task. They are truly the ancient mariners of our oceans with ancestors dating back over 100 million years.

So while all species require tropical, subtropical or temperate oceanic beaches for nesting, each has a specific marine habitat and feeding requirements. I was very fortunate to go down to Trinidad and Tobago and watch these leatherbacks come out of the ocean under the cover of darkness and lay their eggs very artfully into the sand. It was every more gratifying that I actually got to see these hatchlings coming up out of the sand. It was amazing. They instinctually find their way back to the ocean, obviously still unfortunately facing an uncertain future.

But there is a specific chain of events that occurs when these turtle populations drop. Loss of these turtle populations leads to an explosion of jellyfish populations, which can kill lower level food chain fish, which in turn have an impact on tuna and swordfish, which are big contributors to the human population. So we have already seen this increase in our beaches and, as you know, Chairman Fleming, it could have drastic fisheries implications in our home state.

My foundation is in 190 countries at this point with a lot of global outreach, and I just want you to know that the ideology is backed by passion and commitment, so I just want to ask that the Subcommittee move quickly to mark up H.R. 50 and reauthorize this very important piece of legislation. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Somerhalder follows:]

**Statement of Ian Somerhalder on H.R. 50,
The Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act**

Good morning Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan, and Members of the Subcommittee. I am Ian Somerhalder, an actor and founder of the Ian Somerhalder Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to empowering, educating, and collaborating with people to help them positively impact the planet and its creatures. I am also a global Ambassador for the Alliance for Global Conservation.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you today on H.R. 50, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act. I would also like to take

this opportunity to thank the Subcommittee, especially Chairman Fleming—who represents my home state of Louisiana—for the invitation to join you today.

Wildlife and environmental conservation has always been not just a passion, but a priority of mine. When I began to find that through my work as an actor, I was gaining an increasingly prominent platform in front of the American public, I knew right away what I wanted to do with it. The IS Foundation is my attempt to use this opportunity, this share of the public's attention, for the greater good.

The IS Foundation, which now has dozens of affiliate groups around the world from as far off as India and Algeria, focuses its work around 3 themes: habitat conservation, species protection, and clean energy initiatives. Our goal is to support a range of projects, from more established, mature global initiatives like the Alliance for Global Conservation, to smaller, grassroots efforts initiated by individuals in the Gulf and other local communities. The hope is that we can demonstrate ways for everyone to contribute, on any scale. We want to start conversations on these issues and allow them to grow and evolve naturally. When a particular issue gathers enough interest and momentum, we'll lend the resources needed to transform it from a conversation into a project, and hopefully, eventually, from a project to real progress.

In talking to people, and especially young people, all over the country, I have found time and time again that the issue of species conservation is a particularly resonant one. People are passionately attached to the creatures that have captured their attention and their imaginations since childhood, and they are invested in doing whatever is necessary to protect them. Species conservation is beyond a doubt an issue that truly matters to the American public. We're lucky this is the case, because many of our most beloved wildlife species are clinging to survival by a thread.

This legislation initially enacted in 1990, is viewed globally a success story. With the U.S. leading the effort, governments around the world are able to begin investing in their ecosystems. From the Congo to Southern Sudan we are finding that species conservation is paying off in terms of both the environment and local government action.

As Congress considers H.R. 50, I thought it would be useful to share my thoughts on the species that benefit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leadership on conservation.

Tigers: Wild tigers are one such example—an amazing species under terrible threat by poachers and the gradual degradation of their habitat and prey base. According to big cat experts, only around 3,000 tigers exist in the wild today, and experts estimate that more than 500 tigers are killed each year. To make matters worse, the actual breeding population may be closer to a mere 1,000. Tigers are magnificent creatures: big, powerful, and charismatic. Unfortunately, these same qualities make them popular targets—the tiger's beautiful orange pelt commands a high price on the global black market, as do tiger body parts. Their organs and bones are used in Asian medicines, which are sold to consumers who believe these animal products convey strength, health and virility.

Rhinoceroses: Rhinos, too, hover on the brink of extinction. Between 1970 and 1992, rhino populations declined by 96%, and fewer than 2,400 black and white rhinos survived in the wild. Conservation biologists tell me that today only 300 Sumatran rhinos remain. The low number of survivors is exacerbated by the fact that many rhinos live in small, fragmented populations, which may not be viable due to lack of breeding opportunities and risk of random events or disease. Rhino horns are carved for dagger handles as a coveted status symbol in the Middle East, and body parts and bones are sold on the black market as medicinal ingredients. The illegal trade in animal parts is a profitable business, and the demand for these products creates an ongoing temptation for poachers. Rhinos, and tigers too, also fall inadvertently victim to poachers' snares, set to trap other animals for bushmeat or trophies.

African Elephants: African elephants are another species in terrible trouble. In the last century, rampant ivory poaching and habitat loss caused their numbers to drop from over ten million animals in 1900 to fewer than 500,000 by the late 1980s. Uncontrolled hunting and continued loss of habitat still threaten the African elephant today. In addition to the ivory and bushmeat trades, the loss of natural elephant habitat poses a major problem due to the resulting conflict between elephants and humans throughout Africa. As human populations grow and expand into remote areas, natural habitat is cleared and destroyed to make way for agriculture. Elephant populations are compressed into smaller ranges with limited food and water supplies. Hungry elephants wander into villages and damage crops. People often kill elephants in an attempt to stop the crop raids, and people themselves are also sometimes killed trying to fend off desperate elephants.

Asian elephants: Like their relatives, Asian elephants are also struggling to survive. In the United States, Asian elephants are best known as familiar circus attractions. Yet throughout their homeland, captive elephants are primarily beasts of burden. An estimated 16,000 Asian elephants are presently tamed and used for timber harvest, clearing forests, and agricultural development. Ironically, it is the destruction of forests, the advancement of agriculture, and the encroachment of human civilization that pose the greatest threats to the survival of Asia's wild elephants. Asian elephant populations have continued to decline due to loss of grazing areas and poaching driven by the ivory trade, and are listed as endangered on the Endangered Species Act.

Marine Turtles: Six of the seven marine turtle species are listed as threatened or endangered by the World Conservation Union and under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Because marine turtles require 10–40 years to reach sexual maturity and are vulnerable to predation, oil spills, and as by-catch, restoring their numbers is a lengthy and delicate task. Marine turtles are truly the ancient mariners of the world's oceans, with ancestors dating back over 100 million years. While all species require tropical, subtropical, or temperate oceanic beaches for nesting, each has specific marine habitat and feeding requirements. I was fortunate earlier this summer to travel to Trinidad and Tobago and watch leatherback turtles emerge from the sea under cover of darkness to lay their eggs and bury them in the sand. It was even more gratifying to see the hatchlings dig their way out of their sandy nest and instinctively find their way to the ocean. . .still unfortunately facing an uncertain future.

Great Apes such as gorillas and chimpanzees: Apes, by their nature, are extremely vulnerable. They have low population densities, grow relatively slowly, are long-lived, and have low reproductive rates and complex social relationships. Today, all the world's great ape species are threatened with extinction. Apes are susceptible to many of the same diseases as humans. As growing human populations penetrate further into ape habitat, the potential for disease transmission between apes and people, and vice versa, is increasing. As a result, the bushmeat trade poses a serious health risk for humans. Threats facing gorillas and chimpanzees include the loss, fragmentation and degradation of their habitat, as well as hunting for food, medicine and sport. Even with strong recovery programs, the chimpanzee population is 80% lower than 50 years ago, and it continues to drop.

Looking around the world at these wildlife, it's abundantly clear that humans have benefited from nature in so many ways but have also brought many species to the brink of extinction. Scientists warn us that we are on the cusp of the largest mass extinction spasm since the dinosaurs. The American people that I interact with through my IS Foundation work do not want to allow this to happen; they do not want to let these species go without a fight; and they see the way in which nature provides for people around the world. This is an issue that Americans care deeply about, and it is critical that the United States, as a world leader and global power, continue to lead the planet's efforts in global species conservation. Due to instability or indifference in the areas that many of these species call home, for most of them we are the first, last, and only hope for survival. As the ones with the power to make a difference, the responsibility rests with us. It is imperative that we live up to it.

On behalf of the Ian Somerhalder Foundation and the Alliance for Global Conservation, I urge the Subcommittee to mark-up H.R. 50 and move to reauthorize this important piece of legislation.

Mr. FLEMING. Thank you, Mr. Somerhalder.

Next up is Dr. Robinson. Sir, you now have five minutes.

STATEMENT OF JOHN G. ROBINSON, PH.D., EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CONSERVATION SCIENCE, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Dr. ROBINSON. I thank Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan and Members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to testify on H.R. 50, H.R. 1760 and H.R. 1761, and I would like to thank Representatives Miller, Pierluisi and Young for introducing this legislation.

I am Dr. John Robinson, Chief Conservation Officer with the Wildlife Conservation Society, a 115-year-old organization which is

based at the Bronx Zoo and has conservation efforts in 65 countries, many of which focus on tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, great apes and sea turtles, species which are the global priorities for the Multinational Species Conservation Funds.

These funds have received bipartisan support, and they address the threats responsible for species declines. Both today and historically, Americans have supported efforts to prevent the extinction of such charismatic and culturally important species. WCS has worked closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to implement conservation programs supported by the Multinational Species Conservation Funds. Let me highlight some of these.

Members have noted that there are only about 3,000 tigers that live in the wild today, but of these only 1,000 are breeding females. The international trade in tiger parts has dramatically increased over the last five years, and the conservation funds are critical for effective protection of tiger populations at selected national parks and reserves.

With elephants we have seen hunting levels approaching the ivory ban levels over the last three years, especially in Central and West Africa. This poaching is driven by increased demand and price of ivory in Thailand, China and Japan. Conservation funds are supporting programs to protect critical elephant concentrations and control the illegal trade.

Great apes, as noted, remain at dangerously low population numbers. The population of Cross River gorilla is down to less than 300, and the mountain gorillas do not exceed 750 animals. Remaining habitat needs to be protected, and bush meat hunting of these great apes needs to be stopped.

Marine turtles spend their life at sea except when females come to beaches for nesting. Numbers of nesting females of green, hawksbill and leatherback turtles have relentlessly declined over the last decades. Conservation programs are focusing on managing the harvest at sea and protecting beaches.

In this tough fiscal climate, it is essential to preserve inexpensive, efficient programs that provide tangible benefits. Appropriated funds are highly leveraged, and this year generated nearly \$18 million in matching and in-kind contributions from partners. Not only that, but the involvement of the U.S. Government acts as a catalyst for national governments around the world to invest in their own conservation.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service runs a highly competitive and rigorous grant process and maintains tiny overheads, but in addition to these wildlife conservation outcomes Multinational Species Conservation programs have contributed to U.S. national security in countries like South Sudan and the Republic of Congo by allowing alternate channels of diplomacy through NGO's and technical experts, by promoting the respective law and good governance in conflict prone regions and by providing alternatives to violent insurgencies through things like ranger training and employment.

In addition, programs to support an early warning system for outbreaks of deadly pathogens have prevented the spread of diseases such as the Ebola virus that threaten great apes and human populations.

WCS strongly supports the reauthorization of these programs and recommends that Congress recognize the parallel integrity of these funds, the need to ensure continuity of strategic investments and the efficiency of placing these programs on the same authorization cycle and amend H.R. 50 to incorporate H.R. 1760 and 1761 under a single Reauthorization Act. We also recommend that Congress maintain the existing authorization levels, allowing the growth of this invaluable and fiscally responsible program when the budgetary climate stabilizes.

With respect to H.R. 1761, we recommend that the scope of the Marine Turtle Conservation Act be expanded to include freshwater turtles and tortoises, which are harvested extensively and are especially vulnerable to exploitation. Of the 318 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises, 168 are on the red list threatened with extinction.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspectives on these important bills which will reaffirm the leadership of the U.S. Government within the international community, underscore our commitment to our international treaty obligations and encourage coordinated international efforts to save some of the world's most charismatic and valued species. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Robinson follows:]

**Statement of John G. Robinson, Ph.D., Executive Vice President,
Conservation and Science, Wildlife Conservation Society**

Introduction

On behalf of the Wildlife Conservation Society, I thank Chairman Fleming and members of the Subcommittee for the invitation to testify again before this Subcommittee. I am Dr. John G. Robinson, Executive Vice President and Chief Conservation Officer with the Wildlife Conservation Society, which was established by visionary conservationists such as Teddy Roosevelt in 1895. With a mission to conserve wildlife and wild places, the Bronx Zoo-based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has over its 115-year history expanded operations into 65 countries, and today we work in landscapes and seascapes that contain nearly 25% of Earth's biodiversity across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. We are able to do so with the dedicated support of over 4,000 staff including 200 wildlife biologists, landscape ecologists, and field veterinarians. We are a trusted global organization that puts science into effective conservation action and the only organization with a global network of field conservation programs and partners, a wide range of curatorial, veterinary and educational expertise, and a complex of urban zoos that maintain, exhibit, breed, rescue and study a wide range of species.

I testify in support of the enactment of the following pieces of legislation: H.R. 50, *Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2011*, H.R. 1760, *Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2011*, and H.R. 1761, *Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2011*. I will demonstrate the continued investment of the U.S. government in global species conservation during these tough fiscal times and explain the direct and indirect benefits of such investment to U.S. interests. WCS would like to thank Representatives Don Young, George Miller and Pedro Pierluisi for introducing these pieces of legislation and Chairman Fleming and the Members of the Subcommittee for recognizing the importance of the programs to be reauthorized through H.R. 50, H.R. 1760, and H.R. 1761.

Primary Rationale for Continued Investment: Plight of Global Priority Species

The Multinational Species Conservation Funds (MSCF) are targeted investments in global priority species such as tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, great apes and sea turtles. This program came about due to strong bipartisan support to address the threats responsible for species declines, which began with the enactment of the African Elephant Conservation Act in 1988 to answer the illegal trade in ivory. Each of the species supported through these funds are subject to increased pressures from poaching, habitat destruction and other environmental factors. The following para-

graphs briefly highlight the status of the species covered under the MSCF that WCS works to conserve in the wild:

Tigers

Wild tigers (*Panthera tigris*) are threatened by poaching and the gradual degradation of their habitat and prey base. Poaching for the international trade to China including Tibet has resulted in decline and local extinction of populations across the tiger's range, and breeding populations in a number of countries, including Cambodia, China, DPR Korea and Vietnam, are no longer self-sustaining. Even in India, which contains half of all remaining tigers in the wild, a number of reserves such as Panna and Sariska in Rajasthan have lost their tigers. Tigers now occupy only 7% of their historical range. Only around 3,000 tigers exist in the wild today, of which only 1,000 are breeding females.

Elephants

Both African and Asian elephant species are protected by MSCF-backed research and conservation programs. African elephants (genus *Loxodonta*) continue to be threatened by poaching and habitat loss. Between 1979 and 1989, the population was estimated to have halved from 1.2 million to between 500,000 and 700,000. The ban in trade in ivory in 1989 halted the steep decline, but over the last three years we have seen a dramatic increase in the proportion of illegally killed elephants, especially in Central and West Africa. This increase is correlated with high levels of poverty at a site level, and increased demand and higher prices for ivory in international markets. West African populations have shrunk to less than 10,000. Central African populations are approximately under 100,000 elephants. For instance, in Zakouma National Park in Chad, the last stronghold for the savanna elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) of Central Africa's Sahel region, fewer than 500 individuals remain, down from an estimated 3,000 in 2006. In Asia, the number of wild elephants (*Elephas maximus*) has been estimated at only about 50,000, but this is a crude guess. The predominant threat to wild populations is the continued habitat loss and degradation. Asian elephants only occupy 9 percent of their historical range, are on the verge of being extirpated in Vietnam, and are already extirpated in Pakistan, Iran, and Iraq.

Great Apes

Great apes face grave threats: hunting and illegal wildlife trade to supply bushmeat and pets to urban markets; habitat destruction through logging, mining, and agriculture from local slash-and-burn to large-scale commercial plantations; and the spread of devastating infectious diseases such as Ebola. The rarest of the four subspecies of gorilla, the Cross River gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*), which is found on the border between Nigeria and Cameroon, has a population of less than 300 individuals. Mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*), which total only about 720 individuals, are threatened by encroachment into protected areas. As for chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*), the population is 80 percent lower than 50 years ago, even with strong recovery programs in place. Fewer than 7,000 Sumatran orangutans (*Pongo abelii*) remain in the wild. Population decline is primarily a consequence of the accelerating destruction of their native forest habitat by loggers, small-scale farmers, and agribusiness.

Marine Turtles

Seven species of marine turtles currently navigate the oceans of which six species are listed in threatened categories on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List and included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES): green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), the leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), the loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), the hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), the Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), and the olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*). All marine turtles require 10–40 years to reach sexual maturity, nest on beaches, and are found from inshore reefs to deep oceans, making them vulnerable to a wide range of threats throughout their lives, including human and animal predation of their eggs, hatchlings and adults, oil spills, climate change, and being killed as bycatch. The IUCN global assessments for sea turtles, conducted over the past decade, show a 48 to 67 percent decline in the number of green turtle females nesting annually over the last three generations, and an 84 to 87 percent decline for hawksbills over the same time period. For leatherbacks, scientists in the 1990s estimated over 70 percent in reduction of the global population of adult females in less than one generation.

Every species and subspecies protected by the MSCF continues to face significant threats, but this U.S. government investment provides critical intervention to populations that still exist in the wild. Targeted investment in conservation programs

globally can produce successes, as noted below. It would be improper to conclude that conservation projects are ineffective merely because these species are still at risk. Without support from programs such as the MSCF, these animals could have already disappeared from our planet.

Why Invest in the Multinational Species Conservation Funds in this Fiscal Climate?

Conservation is an American tradition respected the world over and proudly supported at home. For example, a strong constituency for conservation exists among the domestic outdoor recreation, fishing and game industries, which annually contribute \$730 billion to the U.S. economy, and support 6.5 million jobs.

Although preservation of biodiversity and prevention of species extinctions are the central benefits, conservation programs are multifaceted investments that aid U.S. global policy priorities at various levels:

Global conservation maintains the U.S. legacy and model of protecting species:

The United States was the first country to make conservation of nature a national goal and as a result, current generations benefit from wild landscapes and charismatic species such as elk, pronghorn and bison. On an international scale, our prominent conservation tradition provides inspiration and guidance to other nations, which have followed American values and strategies by establishing national parks or refuges, designating wilderness areas, monitoring threatened species, and limiting or preventing habitat degradation and destruction. U.S. leadership in conservation enables us to uphold rigorous standards in negotiating several international treaties and commitments impacting species conservation, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which came about as a result of U.S. leadership in 1973.

Wildlife conservation programs are a modest but essential piece of the United States' engagement with the developing world. Through the MSCF programs, the U.S. supplements the efforts of developing countries that are struggling to balance the immediate economic needs of their populations and the need to maintain ecosystem services and conserve biodiversity. MSCF programs help to sustain wildlife populations, address threats by controlling illegal poaching, reducing human-wildlife conflict, and protecting essential habitat. By working with local communities, they also improve people's livelihoods, contribute to local and regional stability, and support U.S. security interests in impoverished regions. As former Speaker Newt Gingrich noted in 1995 on the House floor "this is a very small amount of money, but it is symbolically very important. . . because of the signal it sends to people, particularly in Africa and Asia, about whether or not the United States is prepared to reach out and be helpful."

Americans support the Multinational Species Conservation Funds:

No other developed nation makes a strategic investment in global species conservation the way the U.S. government does through the MSCF program. This program has always enjoyed strong bipartisan support in Congress and is represented by a diverse coalition comprised of 32 national and international groups representing more than 20 million Americans. WCS is proud to be an implementing partner of this program and works with other institutions on the coalition such as the World Wildlife Fund, Safari Club International, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Feld Entertainment, and others. This program has also attracted partners including other developed countries such as the Netherlands Germany, France, United Kingdom, and the European Union, private corporations like Exxon-Mobil and Disney, and range state governments. In the House of Representatives, MSCF enjoys strong bipartisan support with champions like former Speaker Newt Gingrich, Representatives Jim Saxton and Wayne Gilchrest and former chairs of the House Natural Resources Committee –Representatives Don Young and George Miller and former leaders of this Subcommittee –Representatives Henry Brown and Madeleine Bordallo. Every original authorization and reauthorization legislation for this program since 1989 has had strong bipartisan support.

The Multinational Species Conservation Funds are a targeted U.S. investment:

The MSCF are an efficient means of meeting the need for international conservation of critical species. Given that the U.S. dollar can be leveraged significantly in developing countries, modest investments in MSCF have reaped unmatched benefits for species conservation. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers the program with great rigor and clearly articulated goals and priorities with minimum overhead costs. In FY2010 alone, MSCF supported only 57 percent of proposals received (216 of the 379 grant proposals) indicating a substantial growing demand to support species conservation as well as a highly competitive and rigorous

application process. Low administrative costs ensured that 97 percent of the funds appropriated by Congress were distributed through grants. The MSCF are particularly efficient because they provide a multiplying effect to recipient organizations. For every dollar appropriated by Congress, grant recipients leveraged an additional 1.6 dollars in FY2010, together raising nearly \$19 million in additional funding. Between FY1990 and FY2005, Congress appropriated \$37 million for MSCF, allowing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to make incremental increases in the annual number of projects funded and partners added. During this time, matching and in-kind contributions from partners generated more than \$100 million, supporting projects that could have otherwise been neglected. Without the U.S. Congress's foresight and the U.S. government's leadership, populations of some of the Earth's most revered species would have been extirpated.

The Multinational Species Conservation Funds provide high value at low cost:

There are few programs that can boast of a consistent track record of providing direct conservation assistance to wildlife species as well as the communities involved in saving them and protecting their habitat. The MSCF program exemplifies this strong conservation and fiscally responsible ethic. Foreign assistance costs approximately 1.3 percent of the federal budget, and MSCF comprises only .02 percent of foreign assistance spending.

On June 21, 2011, the Department of the Interior (DOI) released a report on its economic contributions detailing the financial impact of DOI bureaus and programs to the nation's economy. The MSCF program, specifically mentioned in the report, is noted as contributing to U.S. jobs and economy in FY2010. With the \$11.5 million appropriated by Congress, the DOI has calculated the MSCF's economic impact at \$22.6 million while supporting 207 U.S. jobs. The average grant under this program often ranges between \$25,000-\$40,000 while the smallest grants to recipients have been \$5,000. This reflects the focus of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in supporting on-the-ground conservation projects that are fiscally responsible and have a strong conservation impact, and that they have been poised to respond with rapid action when called upon, for example providing surveillance support in response to organized syndicates poaching for elephant ivory. Apart from the inherent value of wildlife conservation and research, programs funded through MSCF have furthered U.S. interests by supporting American businesses. For example, specialized equipment deployed by wildlife biologists in the field such as dart guns, veterinary devices, mapping, graphics support, etc., is often produced by American manufacturers across major manufacturing states such as Texas, Wisconsin, Michigan and New Jersey.

MSCF help fight the spread of deadly infectious diseases:

As a result of global transport and trade, global health threats can quickly spread from wildlife to human populations. Butchering and eating wild animals (known as bushmeat), especially great apes and other primates because of their genetic similarity to humans, is a particular risk. Emerging infectious diseases such as Ebola are widespread in tropical rainforests and are deadly to both humans and great apes. There is currently no available treatment for those infected with Ebola and the mortality rate can be as high as 90 percent. For the past decade WCS's Animal Health Monitoring Network, funded in part by the Great Ape Conservation Fund, has encouraged rapid reporting and response to wildlife mortalities and illnesses. This network has provided critical information to researchers and public health agencies including the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health, and serves as an early-warning system to possible future outbreaks in human communities. Human cases of measles, influenza, and tuberculosis—infectious diseases which are also extremely dangerous to great apes—are common in communities living near or in great ape habitat. Over the past seven years, WCS has sustained a highly efficient wildlife health surveillance program in the Republic of Congo which has resulted in over 40 great ape carcasses recovered and tested. In 2005, an estimated 5,000 gorillas in northern Congo disappeared, apparently as a result of an outbreak of Ebola, making a strong case for monitoring wildlife and disease in tropical forests to prevent transmission to humans.

MSCF contribute to national security by encouraging alternative channels for diplomacy, respect for rule of law in conflict-prone regions, and alternatives to joining militias:

Long-term investment by the U.S. government in species conservation has several direct benefits. For instance, training of Russian and Chinese personnel in Management Information System (MIST) law enforcement techniques, stewards transboundary collaboration between these governments and provides significant leverage

to the U.S. in negotiating broader issues of mutual interest. Additionally, successful anti-poaching efforts inculcate respect for rule of law. MSCF funds enabled Wildlife Crimes Units in Indonesia to continue to arrest scores of illegal wildlife traders, and the arrest to prosecution ratio is nearly 70 percent (as compared to the national average of 5 percent). U.S. support for global conservation has allowed U.S.-based NGOs to strengthen local governance structures and management capabilities of park rangers, law enforcement units, indigenous governments and local municipalities.

At the strategic level, conservation programs support the establishment of good governance, with concomitant impacts on natural resource management, social security, and economic sustainability. At the tactical level, global conservation programs provide education and jobs that help to stabilize war-torn regions and employ local citizens who might otherwise be recruited by local militias. For example, strengthening the Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo provided jobs for hundreds of rangers during that nation's long civil war. These rangers both protected mountain gorillas and their habitat and helped control illegal logging and charcoal manufacturing that provided revenues to the insurgencies.

MSCF support sustainable alternative livelihoods for local people in impoverished regions:

Conservation programs provide livelihood opportunities to local people. For instance, since 2004, with support from the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund, WCS has trained 180 individuals from local communities across Africa and Central America, resulting in both long and short-term employment for local people as researchers. Sixty local women have joined research projects in Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo and other sea turtle sites with support from this fund. WCS's efforts on Ebola surveillance in the Republic of Congo alone has supported 62 eco-guards, training for 20 researchers in carcass sampling and 30 field team leaders in health and biological sampling techniques; and educational programs on Ebola for over 915 hunters across 71 villages. Besides providing these services, the Great Ape Conservation Fund sustained and provided assistance to hire 4 field assistants, part-time employment for 74 porters and 2 U.S. veterinarians and biologists, 2 U.S. educators and 4 part-time Congolese biologists.

Strong MSCF success stories contribute to U.S. leadership, goodwill and commitment to conservation:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a strong record in choosing projects for funding which will have the strongest conservation outcome. Since 2007, the MSCF has supported WCS operations in 12 African nations, helped in training 2,420 staff, generating nearly \$7 million in matching funds for U.S. funds and sustaining 44 partner organizations. In Asia, the MSCF has supported WCS operations in 10 countries, training over a thousand staff and sustaining 42 U.S. wildlife biologists and field veterinarians while providing local employment opportunities for 166 essential personnel such as eco-guards, law enforcement personnel, porters, technical assistants. These sustained partnerships have resulted in longstanding friendship and cooperation between the U.S. and range state wildlife protection and natural resource agencies.

WCS appreciates that the partnership with MSCF has allowed us to achieve significant successes on the ground. These successes include:

- In the world's newest democracy, South Sudan, WCS has collaborated with the government and local stakeholders to establish a foundation for natural-resource management, land-use planning, and conservation to reduce conflict and catalyze economic development. WCS surveys in 2007 with help from the African Elephant Conservation Fund found 8,000 elephants and an annual mammal migration that rivals in animal numbers those of the Serengeti. Large tracts of savannas and wetlands have survived decades of war and provide a real opportunity to create a thriving tourism industry. The catalytic role of the U.S. government in conservation has promoted the conditions for a long-term success which hinges on the country's natural endowment.
- This year, the Republic of Congo is in the process of creating Ntokou-Pikounda National Park, which will protect an additional 15,000 western lowland gorillas from habitat loss and poaching. The establishment of this area derives from a grant from the Great Ape Conservation Fund, which tallied in 2008 more than 125,000 western lowland gorillas in the larger landscape of 18,000 square miles.
- MSCF helped WCS conduct research and support frameworks to create the Ulu Sebuyau National Park and the Sedilu Orangutan Sanctuary for the protection of orangutans in Malaysia.

- Due to MSCF funds four Tiger Reserves in India were made significantly larger. The MSCF supported the Indian scientists who gathered the technical information on tigers, elephants and other wildlife and who led the efforts to expand Anshi-Dandeli Tiger Reserve, Bhadra Tiger Reserve, Nagarahole Tiger Reserve and Bandipur Tiger Reserve.
- MSCF funds supported the discovery of the world's largest nesting site for leatherback sea turtles in Gabon on the West Coast of Africa. Without MSCF, fewer than half of the nesting beaches currently protected would be safe for reproduction of this endangered species, and thousands of turtles would perish each year.

Recommendations to the U.S. Congress

As demonstrated through this testimony, the MSCF conserves gravely threatened elephants, tigers, rhinos, great apes and marine turtles and further research and conservation is necessary to secure their important roles in ecosystems. Functional ecosystems in turn are critical to provide the services necessary for human well-being. To this end, WCS requests the U.S. Congress to act swiftly to reauthorize this program with the following considerations:

Maintain existing authorization levels: WCS understands the tough choices that the Congress needs to make in light of policy and fiscal priorities. WCS requests the Subcommittee closely consider the current funding levels for the MSCF, which average roughly around 35–40 percent of their existing authorization levels. Maintaining existing authorization levels would allow the MSCF to grow in the future enabling the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to award more grants and specifically help in achieving conservation successes. Cuts to authorization levels would not guarantee savings to the federal budget. On the contrary, cuts would certainly limit the growth of this invaluable and fiscally responsible program when our budgetary climate stabilizes.

Enhance discretion of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service remains deeply committed to the conservation of global species under the MSCF program. WCS requests the Subcommittee to protect its administrative functions and costs while maintaining its discretion to fund projects in high priority geographical locations. Such discretion would not only continue to foster partnerships with U.S. based NGOs and other entities but would amplify the reach of the program in range states that are political, military and economic allies of the United States.

Expand the scope of the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund (MTCF) to freshwater turtles and tortoises and limit its jurisdiction to sea turtles occurring in U.S. territories: Like marine turtles, tortoises and freshwater turtles are long-lived species that mature late in life and are especially vulnerable to exploitation. Today their respective habitat is being increasingly fragmented, polluted or destroyed. Of about 318 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises, 168 have thus far been assessed as threatened with extinction and are listed on the IUCN Red List. Of the estimated 90 species in Asia, more than 50 percent are considered to be either critically endangered or endangered according to the IUCN. An overwhelming number of freshwater turtles and tortoises are collected, traded in the illegal pet trade; and killed, and consumed as food and in traditional medicine—this is happening at an unsustainable rate. Some species of freshwater turtles and tortoises are down to their last few individuals and stopgap measures, including captive breeding, are underway to prevent their extinction. Together with the China Zoo Society, Changsha and Suzhou Zoos, WCS is helping with captive breeding techniques to save the Yangtze giant soft-shell, (*Rafetus swinhoei*)—the last chance of survival for the world's largest freshwater turtle. WCS endorses the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's desire to conserve freshwater turtles and tortoises and recommends that H.R. 1761 expand eligible species accordingly while ensuring such action does not diminish the modest level of funds allocated to marine turtles.

An analysis of annual federal spending on sea turtles reveals that the MTCF is extremely targeted in terms of investing where the greatest needs exist. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cooperates with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to invest in sea turtle conservation in the United States totaling over \$25 million annually compared to \$1.4 million on threatened species globally. Should H.R. 1761 expand the jurisdiction of this program, WCS recommends that such expansion be limited to sea turtles occurring in U.S. territories only.

Maintain Multinational Species Conservation Funds as an umbrella program: While Congress has considered each species fund authorization at different periods of time, collectively the MSCF program has gained name recognition widely in Congress, within multiple Administrations and among partners. The Congress has a

rare opportunity to reauthorize this program through H.R. 50, H.R. 1760 and H.R. 1761 together under the banner of the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act. WCS requests that H.R. 50 be amended to incorporate H.R. 1760 and H.R. 1761 to reflect this recommendation. This would not only ensure continuity of strategic investments but would also place these programs on the same reauthorization cycle.

In conclusion, congressional action on H.R. 50, H.R. 1760 and H.R. 1761, will reaffirm the leadership of the U.S. Government within the global community, underscore U.S. commitment to international treaty obligations, and encourage coordinated efforts to save the world's global priority species. WCS urges the Subcommittee and the Congress as a whole to act quickly and positively on the reauthorization of these critical pieces of legislation. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment and to work with you on this issue.

Mr. FLEMING. Thank you, Dr. Robinson.
Now, Dr. Stoinski, you are now recognized for five minutes.

**STATEMENT OF TARA S. STOINSKI, PH.D., ZOO ATLANTA
AND THE DIAN FOSSEY GORILLA FUND INTERNATIONAL**

Dr. STOINSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Subcommittee Members, for the opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 1760, the Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization Amendments Act.

I am Dr. Tara Stoinski, and I serve as the McGrath Chair of Conservation and Science for the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, which has as its mission conserving gorillas and their habitats and helping the people that share the gorillas' forest home. I also serve as the Manager of Conservation Partnerships for Zoo Atlanta, which is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Mr. Chairman, the magnificent animals listed under the Great Ape Conservation Act are still in great peril today. The World Conservation Union categorizes all great apes as either endangered or critically endangered, and their populations across the world are rapidly declining from a multitude of threats, which include habitat loss, hunting, disease, mining, forest fires and civil conflict.

H.R. 1760 represents a congressional commitment to continue to address the desperate plight of the great apes. The Great Ape Conservation Act is a proven formula that promotes cooperation among government entities, local communities, NGO's and the private sector. It funds on-the-ground, rapid result initiatives that can be seen and felt by local people.

This is essential because it is only through local action, local education and local support that realistic solutions for saving the great apes can be devised and implemented. We highly recommend it be reauthorized at its current appropriation levels of \$5 million per year.

It is important to recognize that funds designated for ape conservation protect many species beyond the apes, including our own. Apes live almost exclusively in the tropical forests of Asia and Africa. Tropical forests cover only 7 percent of the world's surface, yet they contain an estimated 50 percent of the world's biodiversity.

Africa's Congo Basin, which is home to all three species of African great apes and represents 18 percent of the world's remaining tropical rainforests, is estimated to contain over 10,000 species of plants, 1,000 species of birds and 400 species of mammals. For local human populations—and over 100 million people live in the Congo Basin alone—the forests are a source of food, shelter, water

and income. They serve as the world's pharmacy. Roughly 25 percent of today's medicines originated in the rainforest.

They perform critical ecosystem services. At the local level they prevent soil erosion and regulate rainfall patterns. Globally they act as the lungs of the planet, storing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. By storing carbon dioxide, which is a greenhouse gas, forests play a critical role in mitigating global climate change. Roughly one-fifth of greenhouse gas emissions are carbon dioxide released as a result of deforestation. Thus, investment by the U.S. Government and taxpayers in protecting apes and their rainforest homes is more than good environmental stewardship. It is an investment in our own future.

I would now like to highlight how the Great Ape Conservation Act has helped the Fossey Fund in our mission of saving gorillas and helping people. Our work conserving gorillas began in Rwanda in 1967 when Dr. Dian Fossey founded the Karisoke Research Center to study and protect one of the two remaining populations of the magnificent mountain gorilla.

Karisoke has operated continuously over the last 44 years, making it the world's longest running gorilla conservation program, and the Great Ape Conservation Act has provided us with critical funding to maintain this long-term daily protection presence.

I am extremely happy to report that our work is paying off. The mountain gorilla population has increased from a low of 250 individuals at Dr. Fossey's time to 480 individuals today. This change of fortune for the mountain gorilla cannot be overstated. It is the only known wild great ape population that is increasing, and our scientific results clearly show that it is the high level of investment in protection over four decades that has enabled its remarkable recovery.

In the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Great Ape Conservation Act funding has been instrumental in our work developing a program for community conservation outside of national parks in which local people manage their own natural resources and protect the biological heritage. Using the gorilla as a flagship species, nine community reserves have been established which provide gorilla and overall forest protection to an area roughly the size of Connecticut. This is local people doing this work.

In both Rwanda and Eastern Congo, the Great Ape Conservation Act has permitted the Fossey Fund to expand our health and development activities for the local human communities that share their environment with the gorillas. Our activities focus on treating intestinal parasites in people that live near protected areas, rehabilitating rural health clinics, building capacity through training medical personnel and increasing human access to clean water. We estimate that over 400,000 people have benefitted from these programs.

Our experience at the Fossey Fund is clear. We have seen that support from the American people to save great apes inspires and motivates Africans. It brings the conservation struggle to their doorstep and empowers them to do something meaningful for their forest and their communities.

It directly links African and American hearts and minds in a common goal; that together we can make room on our planet for

our children, for the great apes and gorillas and for the majestic forests in which they live. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Stoinski follows:]

Statement of Tara Stoinski, Ph.D., Pat and Forest McGrath Chair of Research and Conservation, The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International, and Manager of Conservation Partnerships, Zoo Atlanta, on H.R. 1760, The Reauthorization of the Great Ape Conservation Act of 2011

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to testify this morning on this very important piece of legislation, H.R. 1760—the reauthorization of the Great Ape Conservation Act.

My name is Tara Stoinski, and I am the Pat and Forest McGrath Chair of Research and Conservation at the The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund. The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund has as its mission the conservation and protection of gorillas and their habitats in Africa. We are committed to promoting continued research on the gorillas and their threatened ecosystems and to providing education about their relevance to the world in which we live. In collaboration with government agencies and other international partners, we also provide assistance to local communities through education, health, training and development initiatives. Our tag line is saving gorillas, helping people because we feel that only integrated solutions to conservation that intimately involve and engage the local human population will save gorillas and other biodiversity.

I also serve as the Manager of Conservation Partnerships for Zoo Atlanta, which is a member of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA). I currently serve as the chair of the AZA's Ape Taxon Advisory Group, which has oversight over all apes living in AZA institutions.

AZA represents over 210 professionally-managed and accredited institutions which draw over 142 million visitors annually and have more than 8 million zoo and aquarium members. Our institutions dedicate millions of dollars annually to support scientific research, conservation and education programs that focus on, among other things, the devastating effects of the loss of vital species habitat and the illegal trade in endangered species parts and products.

The Fossey Fund wishes to commend the foresight of this Subcommittee and the Full Committee in the establishment and maintenance of the Multinational Species Conservation Funds—which include African elephants, Asian elephants, rhinos, tigers, marine turtles and great apes. AZA also wishes to commend the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the exemplary manner in which they have administered these funds. Unlike many government grants programs, this funding effort has put real dollars into the field in real time, with a minimum of bureaucratic delay or red-tape. In addition, the Service has been able to leverage these scarce Federal dollars with over three times that amount in matching and in-kind contributions.

HR. 1760, reauthorization of the Great Ape Conservation Act

Regarding the legislation before us today, I would first like to thank Congressman George Miller for introducing this important bill and for all of his efforts in support of fisheries and wildlife conservation. I would also like to extend my sincerest appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, for your excellent leadership in this area as well.

Mr. Chairman, the magnificent animals featured in the Great Ape Conservation Act of 2000 are still in great peril today. The IUCN (World Conservation Union) Red List categorizes all great apes as either Endangered or Critically Endangered, which means they face a 'very' or 'extremely' high (respectively) risk of extinction in the wild. Critically Endangered great apes include the Cross River gorilla subspecies (numbered at only 250–280 individuals), the Mountain gorilla (at 800 individuals), and the Sumatran orangutan (at 7334 individuals). To graphically illustrate the urgency of this situation, here are the most recent estimations concerning population estimates for gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans, and gibbons.

Gorilla: For the Western gorilla, including its two subspecies, the total population numbers between 94,500 and 110,000. For the Eastern gorilla, including its two subspecies, the total population is estimated at less than 10,000.

Chimpanzee: The chimpanzee and the four subspecies comprising it now collectively number between 100,000 and 200,000. Chimpanzees are now extinct in 4 of the 25 countries they once inhabited.

Bonobo: The bonobo only occurs in one range state—the DR Congo. Bonobo population numbers are estimated to be between 10,000 and 50,000 today.

Orangutan: The orangutan is comprised of two species, the Bornean and Sumatran orangutan. The more numerous Bornean orangutans, including three sub-

species, number between 45,000 to 69,000. The Critically Endangered Sumatran orangutan is estimated at only 6,500 individuals.

Gibbon: Twelve species of gibbons, small apes found across Southeast Asia, are listed on the IUCN Red List. Two species, the Hoolock gibbon and the Black gibbon, are classified as Endangered and two species, the Javan gibbon and the Eastern Black Crested gibbon are categorized as Critically Endangered. Current population numbers for gibbons are still unknown.

The estimated population numbers I have listed are just that—estimates. Most global population estimates are extrapolated from small surveys because it is extremely difficult to obtain accurate population numbers and monitor trends for forest-dwelling animals. In some areas, civil conflict has prevented this important survey research. But one thing is certain: ape populations across the world are declining—and they are declining rapidly.

Threats:

Threats to the great apes are numerous. For the African species, including gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos, diseases such as Ebola hemorrhagic fever and the commercial bushmeat trade are, by far, the most serious threats. Ebola is only one of at least 100 infectious agents that are shared between humans and great apes. In 1994 and 1996, in northeastern Gabon, western lowland gorillas and chimpanzees were nearly wiped out during human Ebola outbreaks. In a recent epidemic in northwestern Congo, Ebola is blamed for over 130 human deaths and over 600 great ape deaths—over half the great ape population for the region.

Bushmeat is an economically important food and trade item for thousands of poor rural and urban families in West and Central Africa and other regions of the world. Virtually uncontrolled access to forest wildlife, rising demand for bushmeat, lack of economic options for rural communities, the absence of affordable protein substitutes, and the opening up of frontier forests have resulted in a commercial level trade in wildlife that is literally emptying the forests. We are facing what is now popularly referred to as the “Empty Forest Syndrome,” where the trees may be left standing but the endemic wildlife is long removed. And if the essential wildlife—the predators, the prey, the seed spreaders, the natural fertilizers—are gone, the question of ecological balance becomes paramount.

However, disease and the bushmeat crisis represent only two of the many threats to the world’s diminishing great ape populations. Habitat loss and degradation are equally serious threats to the orangutans and gibbons of Southeast Asia. Until its recent protection, Sebangau National Park on the island of Borneo had been degraded by intensive logging. The 1995 population level of 13,000 orangutans consequently shrank to only 6,900 today, which is still one of the largest known populations.

Added to these are the threats that plague great apes everywhere—conversion of habitat to agricultural lands, the illegal pet trade, mining, forest fires, and civil conflict. Exploitation of forests for commercial logging and mineral prospecting mean that new access routes are extended into ape habitat, leading to increased bushmeat hunting and capture of animals for the illegal pet trade. Degradation of forest habitat also results in small, unconnected patches that isolate ape populations from each other and put them at an increased risk of extinction from chance demographic factors. The capture of infant chimpanzees, orangutans, and gibbons for the pet trade and entertainment industry frequently involves killing the mother and other adults. Orangutans sold as pets can yield more than \$10,000 (U.S. dollars), but it has been estimated that five animals die for every one that is traded.

Underlying and exacerbating these threats is the fact that great apes have very slow reproductive rates. Most apes do not reach sexual maturity until between the ages of 8 and 15, and can only bear young every 4 to 8 years. This means that ape populations simply cannot recover from the devastating threats they face on a multitude of fronts.

Mr Chairman, H.R. 1760 represents a Congressional commitment to continue to address the desperate plight of the great apes. The Great Ape Conservation Act is a proven formula designed to enhance programs for the conservation of great apes by assisting efforts in many worthwhile endeavors. Chief among these are: 1) to address the conflicts between humans and great apes that arise from competition for the same habitat; and 2) to promote cooperative projects among government entities, affected local communities, non-governmental organizations, or other persons in the private sector. These two criteria are essential because it is only through local action, local education, and local support that realistic solutions for saving the great apes can be devised and implemented. If one looks at the projects that have been funded to date under the Great Ape Conservation Fund, we see that this mandate

has been fully implemented. We highly recommend that it be reauthorized at its current appropriation level of \$5 million.

Programmatic Support of The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund

The Great Ape Conservation Act has been critical in helping the Fossey Fund achieve its goal of saving gorillas and helping people. In the last six years, the Fossey Fund has received over 1.3 million dollars in funding from the Great Ape Conservation Act. The Fossey Fund's work began in Rwanda in 1967 when Dr. Dian Fossey founded the famous Karisoke Research Center to study and protect the magnificent mountain gorilla. Karisoke has operated continuously over the last 44 years—making it the world's longest running gorilla conservation program—and the Great Ape Conservation Act has provided us with critical funding to maintain this long-term, daily protection presence. Our work is paying off—a census conducted in 2010 showed that the mountain population has increased from a low of 250 individuals at Dr. Fossey's time to 480 individuals. This change of fortune for the mountain gorilla cannot be understated—it is the **only** known wild great ape population in the world that is increasing, and our results clearly show that it is the high level of investment in protection over four decades that has enabled its remarkable recovery.

The Great Ape Conservation Act has also enhanced Karisoke's education programs focused on building conservation and science literacy and capacity in Rwanda. These programs include developing conservation curriculum for primary and secondary students, forming youth environmental clubs, supervising university students, and educating local leaders about the benefits of wildlife conservation.

In eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Great Ape Conservation Act funding has been instrumental in developing a grass-roots program for community conservation outside of national parks, in which local people manage their own natural resources and are empowered to protect their biological heritage. Using the gorilla as a flagship species, nine of these community reserves have been established, which provide gorilla and overall forest protection over a region of nearly 2.5 million acres, an area roughly the size of Connecticut.

In both Rwanda and eastern DRC, the Great Ape Conservation Act has permitted the Fossey Fund to expand our health and development activities for the local communities that share their environment with the gorillas. These activities focus on treating intestinal parasites in humans living near protected areas; rehabilitating rural health clinics; building capacity through training medical personnel; and increasing access to clean water. We estimate that over 400,000 people in Rwanda and eastern DRC have benefited from these programs.

It is important to recognize that funds designated for ape conservation protect many species beyond the apes, including our own. Apes live almost exclusively in the tropical forest of Asia and Africa. Tropical forests cover only 7% of the world's surface yet they contain an estimated 50% of the world's biodiversity. Africa's Congo basin, which is home to all three species of African great apes and represents 18% of the world's remaining tropical forests, is estimated to contain 10,000 species of plants, 1,000 species of birds, 700 species of fish, and 400 species of mammals. These complex ecosystems support not just their own biodiversity but humans as well. For local human populations—and over 100 million people live in the Congo Basin alone—they are a source of food, shelter, water and income. These forests also serve as the world's pharmacy—roughly 25% of today's medicines originated in the rainforest. They perform critical ecosystem services, both locally and globally. At the local level, they prevent soil erosion and regulate rainfall patterns. Globally, they act as the lungs of the planet, absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. By storing carbon dioxide—which is a greenhouse gas—forests play a critical in mitigating global climate change. Roughly one fifth of green house gas emissions are in the form carbon dioxide that is released as a result of deforestation. Thus, investment by the U.S. government and taxpayers in protecting apes and their tropical rainforest homes is more than good environmental stewardship; it is an investment in our own future.

Our experience at the Fossey Fund is clear. We have seen that support from the American people for local action to save great apes inspires and motivates Africans—it brings the conservation struggle to their doorstep, focuses on an animal icon they themselves respect, and empowers them to do something meaningful for their forests, for their mountains, and for their communities. This grass-roots approach directly links African and American hearts and minds in a common goal—that we can make room on our planet for our children, for gorillas and other great apes, and for the majestic forests in which they live.

The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund strongly supports H.R. 1760 and encourages its swift passage out of the Committee and movement to the House floor.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on this important wildlife conservation measure.

Mr. FLEMING. Thank you, Dr. Stoinski.
Now, Mr. Diez, you have five minutes, sir.

**STATEMENT OF CARLOS E. DIEZ, NATIONAL COORDINATOR,
SEA TURTLE PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES, GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO
RICO**

Mr. DIEZ. Good morning, Chair and Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Carlos Diez, Sea Turtle Coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources of Puerto Rico. I just want to clarify that even though I have been working in the Department of Natural Resources for 17 years, I have been doing sea turtle work since I was 14 years old as a volunteer.

Anyway, I came here in support of the reauthorization bill for the Marine Turtle Conservation Act with its amendments. However, we also support the reauthorization of the two other Acts under review today.

As many of you know, sea turtles have a very complicated life cycle. It includes different phases and migrations as seen in this diagram, the hatchlings swimming to the open ocean to adult females nesting on sandy beaches. During all this process, sea turtles inhabit or travel through many geopolitical areas or countries.

As you can observe on these maps the trajectories of different species of sea turtles starting at Puerto Rico and how they migrate to other countries, they clearly indicate that we are dealing with shared resources, and our conservation efforts need to extend to other countries too. Therefore, the reauthorization for the Marine Turtle Fund is vital to the conservation of this species.

Through these funds, conservation projects in other geopolitical areas such as the Dominican Republic, as an example, can be at least partially sponsored to assure that turtles that nest in Puerto Rico or any part of the U.S. are being protected. Through the Marine Turtle Fund, many initiatives have taken place, such as workshops, nest protection. We already heard some of these programs sponsored by this fund from our colleague here from Fish and Wildlife Service.

In Puerto Rico, we get funding from Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act from the Federal agencies of Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS, which have been used for sea turtle conservation projects. Similar to the Marine Turtle Fund, we have been able to leverage almost the same amount of funding assigned.

Long-term projects like the hawksbill turtles at Mona Island and research on the west coast of Puerto Rico have been very successful. Nesting numbers increased almost 70 percent in the last 20 years. However, there are still threats in other areas that need our attention.

As you can see in these photos, all taken last year and this year in Puerto Rico, threats such as human and urban development, ocean, et cetera, continue to endanger this species, in particular the

hawksbill turtle, which is one of the most critical endangered sea turtles.

Nowadays, Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act faces major cuts to the point that NMFS didn't have any funding for this coming fiscal year which, by the way, we got awarded but couldn't get granted due to the lack of funding from this agency. Therefore, any bill, law or other initiative to be able to recover sea turtle populations abroad and at home as the Marine Turtle Fund is urgently needed.

Sea turtles are important for the health of the oceans and beaches. We already heard that with our friend here, Mr. Somerhalder. It is the duty of the government to guarantee the well being of the Federal citizens.

And even the U.S. citizens or taxpayers care about sea turtle conservation. I see it every day. Just two nights ago before I came here, residents and tourists from the States from a nearby beach called me and asked me to assist them in helping hatchlings get to the ocean. Residents from the States come every year to Puerto Rico to swim with turtles, observe them laying eggs and even participate in the conservation programs.

So please, I kindly ask you to support this bill as it is submitted, which is not a lot of money, and really make this work and of course this country a little better and a happier place to be. Mucho gracias.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Diez follows:]

Statement of Carlos E. Diez, Puerto Rico's National Sea Turtle Coordinator, Department of Natural and Environmental Resources of Puerto Rico, on Re-authorization of the International Marine Turtle Conservation Fund

My name is Carlos Diez and I am the National Coordinator for the Sea Turtle Program of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources of Puerto Rico and also a biologist at the Endangered Species Program. In addition, I am a member of the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group and National Coordinator of the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network. However, today, I am here on behalf of the government of Puerto Rico and in support of the re-authorization bill for the International Sea Turtle Conservation Fund, submitted by our Resident Commissioner, Pedro Pierluisi and co-authors.

As many of you already know, all species of sea turtles are threatened or endangered due to direct and indirect impacts of human intervention. For example, in Puerto Rico, and in many other places of the Caribbean, sea turtles are hunted for their meat, eggs and carapace. In other areas, sea turtles can be incidental victims of long-line fisheries or are severely affected by oil spills. Other sources of pollution, such as discarded plastics also cause significant sea turtle mortality. Even though these animals can produce many eggs and potentially many hatchlings, they have to contend with natural threats as well, such as predators and the effects of severe weather that can harm the beaches where the eggs are laid. In sea turtles, age of sexual maturity tends to be quite high (at least 16 years), so that's why it takes so long for a population to recover from depressed levels. However, sea turtle populations can recover, and a good example in Puerto Rico's case, at Mona Island, we have the biggest hawksbill turtle nesting rookery in the U.S. jurisdiction and the second largest in the insular Caribbean. When we started counting nests numbers in 1989 our data indicated about 250 nests per season. Last year, we counted 1400 nests. The reason for this success were several factors, 1) an international commercial ban on hawksbill products, especially to Japan, which used to import approximately 5000 hawksbill turtles per year from the Caribbean; 2) control of domestic poaching by federal and state law enforcement; 3) and finally Mona Island's conservation status as natural reserve, where development is prohibited and sea turtle predators such as feral pigs have been controlled.

All these efforts were conducted in great amount thanks to the U.S. Federal government, in particular Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The funding provided by these two agencies allowed us to not only

protect these species, but also to understand basic information such as age to sexual maturity, population genetic and migration. The last one is quite important, since it give us the data of where these turtles were going after nesting or from where this turtles came from in our feeding grounds (typically reefs or sea grass beds). It was from saturation tagging, satellite tracking and molecular studies that we learned hawksbill turtles and sea turtles in general are shared resources, or a mixed stock in scientific terms. Our hawksbills turtles regularly migrate to countries such as Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Colombia, and potentially elsewhere in the Caribbean. Green turtles tagged in PR have been found traveling as far as Brazil and leatherbacks cross the Atlantic up to the coast of Wales, or to Canada, by way of New England. Conducting surveys in PR, we've also re-captured animals from other countries such as U.S. Virgin Islands, Bonaire and the Dominican Republic. It is clear that these turtles are internationally shared resources.

Therefore, if we don't protect sea turtles in other geo-political jurisdiction all our efforts at home are in vain. The International Marine Turtle Conservation Fund provides the mechanism to support such projects, such as the effort in the Dominican Republic, which needs funding to protect its beaches from turtle poachers; or in Nicaragua to make fisherman understand that the turtles they catch are not only theirs. By supporting projects like these, sea turtles are hugely benefited in the USA. The USA is a noble country, and most of its citizens enjoy helping these types of initiatives where the benefits to conservation are clear.

The International Marine Turtle Conservation Fund is a method to provide other countries financial assistance in protecting our turtles. However, we (PR) as many states and other territories are in financial difficulties and many of our conservation programs are as well. Therefore, we support the amendment for including up to 20% for the territories to compete for funding in this bill. We have provided an example of a success story with the hawksbill turtles at Mona Island, but in PR, we have two more species, plus more nesting areas for hawksbill turtles that are in jeopardy. In mainland PR, we used to have nesting of hawksbills turtles all over, and now it is limited to very few areas and every year these beaches are being affected by tourist development, or other human related activities and of course poachers. Even though we have received federal funding, it always has been limited, due to our small area. However, we have 3 species of sea turtles and particularly the hawksbill which is one of the most endangered animals on Earth. Last year, even though we were awarded a grant in the Section 6 Program from NMFS, the program didn't have funding assigned by Congress and therefore, the grant could not be awarded. If we try to get funding from other sources, such as European Funds, ect. . . , we are rejected since many of these programs don't include USA due to our "funding opportunities, such as Section 6". Again, these days, those "other funding sources" have no funds or limited money to support any project. The actual status of the federal government, where NMFS's Section 6 (Protected Species Program) is without funding, it is just an example to make us support any law or effort that could provide funding for U.S. territories to protect sea turtles.

Finally, we, the Dept. of Natural and Environmental Resources of PR reiterate our support for the re-authorization bill with the amendment to include at least 20% of the funds for U.S. territories on behalf of the sea turtles of USA.

Gracias!

Mr. FLEMING. Thank you, Mr. Diez.

Mr. Hosmer, you are next, sir.

**STATEMENT OF JOSEPH HOSMER, PRESIDENT,
SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION**

Mr. HOSMER. Thank you, sir. Mr. Chairman, Committee, esteemed colleagues, good morning. My name is Joe Hosmer, and I am very thankful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the hunter conservation community today. I currently serve as the President of Safari Club International Foundation, SCIF. I am a life-long hunter. It has been a family tradition for millions of years.

We are a charitable organization that funds and manages programs dedicated to wildlife conservation, outdoor education and the humanitarian services. SCIF has worked tirelessly to increase wild-life management capability throughout Southern, Central and

Eastern Africa through strategic partnerships directly with African nations and conservation NGO's.

Safari Club International Foundation believes that the United States plays a pivotal role in international conservation. The United States' continued support for international conservation projects is necessary both for continued growth of wildlife populations and for the stability of rural economies throughout many nations of Africa. For these reasons, we strongly support H.R. 50, the Multinational Species Conservation Fund Reauthorization Act of 2011.

As an organization, we are highly committed to wildlife conservation throughout the world, but we have a particular affection and interest for African species. I would like to offer the hunting community's perspective on the importance of international conservation funding. There is a tremendous return on your investment that rural economies realize through effective, sustainable use wildlife practices. Our Conservation Committee alone dedicates over \$1 million annually to global wildlife conservation with a specific focus on conserving African species.

We are the leader in Africa, and as such we have led the development of the African Wildlife Consultative Forum, which brings together African wildlife officials, representatives of the African professional hunter associations, CITES, international NGO's and of course the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's staff. At these meetings we have increased collaboration for sustainable use conservation programs and have improved relations, which increase rural economic development around sustainable use hunting.

Our speakers today have touched on the incredible impact that conservation funds have made for wildlife populations. I would like to speak specifically about the impact on rural economies and the conservation of these species.

The role of sport hunting today in many developing countries is vital to the very survival of these communities. Using Southern Africa as a simple example, sport hunting has been one of the main economic engines in the rural communities. In many countries in Southern Africa, the land is just not suitable for agricultural use or grazing. In these areas, regulated hunting has been historic for the revenue of these local communities.

To take better advantage of sustainable wildlife use, many governments have begun community-based natural resource programs. These programs in essence devolve the power of the central government so that locally created community councils can regulate and manage wildlife in their own areas. The mission is to utilize wildlife so that it remains a sustainable resource within their community.

These community programs have been successful because they effectively create a financial incentive for the rural communities to actively conserve wildlife. Revenue retention schemes ensure that money generated from sport hunting ends up directly in the hands of the indigenous population.

Particularly in Africa, creating an incentive to co-exist with wildlife has been a central reason why many populations of species are now thriving. The growing population of white rhino has been one

of the most notable success stories as pointed out earlier today by a committee member.

Unsurprisingly, in the countries like Kenya where wildlife utilization by indigenous people is extremely limited and where hunting does not exist, wildlife population levels are now low and in continuous decline. Trophy hunting in Kenya was banned in 1977, and this ban has resulted directly in an accelerated loss of wildlife due to the removal of incentives for conservation.

As an organization, SCIF has not directly used the funds available through authorization. However, organizations that we partner with in providing matching grants have been recipients of funds from the Fish and Wildlife Service. The investments that the U.S. Government has made through the Multinational Species Conservation Funds are necessary. They both provide stability for ongoing wildlife conservation investments from other organizations such as us and from hunters who travel.

H.R. 50 certainly provides significant and measurable success. Mr. Chairman, that is the answer to your question. It provides significant and measurable successes for a very small investment in our Federal dollars. I appreciate your time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hosmer follows:]

Statement of Joseph Hosmer, President, Safari Club International Foundation, on H.R. 50, Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2011

Good morning, my name is Joe Hosmer, and I am very thankful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the hunter-conservation community today.

The Safari Club International Foundation (SCIF) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that funds and manages programs dedicated to wildlife conservation, outdoor education, and humanitarian services. Since 2000, SCIF has provided in excess of \$50 million in support to these causes around the world. SCIF has worked tirelessly to increase wildlife management capability throughout Southern and Eastern Africa through strategic partnerships with African nations and conservation NGOs.

Currently, SCIF participates on the steering committee of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund Coalition and SCIF has participated as a member of the Multinational Species Coalition for well over 10 years. In our current role on the coalition, we assist in providing grassroots support for the species conservation funds.

Safari Club International Foundation believes that the United States plays a pivotal role in international conservation. We further believe that the United States' continued support for international conservation projects is necessary, both for the continued growth of wildlife populations, and for the stability of rural economies throughout many nations of Africa. For these reasons the Safari Club International Foundation strongly supports H.R. 50, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2011.

As an organization, SCIF is highly committed to wildlife conservation throughout the world, but we have a particular affection and interest for African wildlife species. I would like to offer the hunting community's perspective on the importance of investing in conservation funding internationally. There is a tremendous return on investment that rural economies realize through effective sustainable use practices for wildlife management.

SCIF's Conservation Committee dedicates over a million dollars annually to global wildlife conservation, with a specific focus on conserving African species. SCIF's leadership in Africa has led to the development of the African Wildlife Consultative Forum, which brings together African wildlife officials, representatives of the African professional hunter associations, international NGO's and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services staff. At these meetings we have increased collaboration for sustainable use conservation programs, and we have improved relations to increase rural economic development around sustainable hunting.

Other speakers today will touch on the incredible impact that the conservation funds have made for wildlife populations. I would like to speak specifically about

the impact on rural economies that sustainable use and conservation of these species can have.

The role of sport hunting today in many developing countries is vital to the very survival of communities. Using southern Africa as an example, sport hunting has been one of the main economic engines in rural communities. In many countries of southern Africa, agrarian or pastoral economies cannot flourish, due to limited land suitable for agriculture or grazing. In these areas, regulated sport hunting has been a consistent form of revenue for local communities. To take better advantage of sustainable wildlife use, many governments have begun Community Based Natural Resources Programs. These programs, in essence, devolve power from the central government so that locally created community councils can regulate and manage wildlife in their areas. Their mission is to utilize wildlife so that it remains a sustainable resource for their community.

Successful community based programs have been developed across Africa including, but not limited to, Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources, otherwise known as CAMPFIRE, in Zimbabwe; Living In a Finite Environment, known as LIFE in Namibia; and other programs in Zambia, Botswana and Tanzania. rural communities to actively conserve wildlife. Revenue retention schemes ensure that money generated from sport hunting ends up in the hands of indigenous people. In the case of sport hunting in southern Africa, communities in the most rural portions of countries reap the benefit of conserving wildlife through Community Based Natural Resource Programs.

Here are some facts and figures on the positive economic impact that sport hunting has in Africa.

1. International hunting by 18,500 hunters generates \$200 million USD annually in remote rural areas of Africa in 23 countries. Private hunting operations conserve wildlife on 540,000 square miles, which is 22% more land mass than is found in all the national parks of Africa. (Lindsey, Conservation Biology, 2007)
2. "Hunting is of key importance to conservation in Africa by creating [financial] incentives to promote and retain wildlife as a land use over vast areas. . ." (National Geographic News, March, 2007)
3. In Namibia, 29 conservancies involve almost 150,000 rural individuals through trophy hunting, conservancy management or secondary industries. (Weaver, C.L. & Skyer, P. 2003.)
4. The Zambian Wildlife Authority works with safari operators to ensure that as part of their contract they must develop and manage roads, employ Zambian Professional Hunters or Apprentice Hunters, ensure that a minimum of 80% of labor comes from neighboring communities, develop local infrastructure, notably schools, clinic and wells, and employ Zambian game scouts to manage wildlife and poaching. (Kampamba, G. 2005.)
5. International hunting employs approximately 3,700 people annually in Tanzania. (www.tanzania.go.tz/) and supports over 88,000 families (Hurt & Ravn 2000)

Particularly in Africa, creating an incentive to coexist with wildlife has been a central reason why so many populations of species are now thriving. Elephants, rhinos and lions are the best examples of this dynamic at work. Of the 23 southern African nations that have regulated hunting, an overall trend of positive species population growth has been reported. The growing population of white rhino has been one of the most notable success stories. Unsurprisingly, in countries like Kenya, where wildlife utilization by indigenous people is extremely limited and where hunting does not exist, wildlife population levels are now low and in continuous decline. Trophy hunting in Kenya was banned in 1977 and this ban has resulted in an accelerated loss of wildlife due to the removal of incentives for conservation (Baker 1997; Lewis & Jackson 2005).

As an organization, SCIF has not directly utilized the funds made available through the authorizing legislation. However, organizations that SCIF has partnered with in providing matching grants have been recipients of funding from the FWS.

The investments that the U.S. government has made through the multination species conservation funds are necessary. They provide stability and continuity for ongoing wildlife conservation investments from other organizations, and from the hunters who travel to Africa. The MSCF certainly provides significant and measurable successes for a very small investment of federal dollars.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak before the subcommittee today.

Mr. FLEMING. Thank you, Mr. Hosmer.

At this point, we will begin Member questions of witnesses. To allow all Members to participate and to ensure we can hear from all of our witnesses today, Members are limited to five minutes for their questions. However, if Members have additional questions we can have more than one round of questioning and usually do. I now recognize myself for five minutes.

Mr. Hosmer, I greatly admire the work of the Safari Club, also Ducks Unlimited. I love the concept of the buy-in, sort of a Teddy Roosevelt conservation that is to say. Hunters have really the largest stake in conservation than anyone. Fishermen as well. And so I love the concept and I love the fact that private matching money far exceeds Federal money. I think that is definitely the right thing.

However, this country is broke. Now we borrow 40 cents of every dollar that we spend. So the question is to you, sir, and really to everyone in this country. How can we afford to continue funding these programs, considering our dire financial situation?

Mr. HOSMER. One of the benefits of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund is that they specifically work to solicit matching grants from NGO's and other donors, and that is a key element to this.

The relatively small investment by the U.S. taxpayer is multiplied by the private donations that make significant impact for rural economies in some of the most impoverished parts of the world. You don't have this advantage in a lot of opportunity. You know, what you are doing is great and it echoes around the world.

Mr. FLEMING. Do you see a time when we can do this completely, 100 percent privately in terms of funding?

Mr. HOSMER. I think the seed money gives it a credibility. I think it gives it an important credibility that helps to leverage.

From the business world, if you get a big corporate sponsor then you can usually pick up a number of small ones, and this is no different. The U.S. Governments gives it great status.

Mr. FLEMING. All right. Sure. Thank you.

Ms. Saito, for Fiscal Year 2012 the Obama Administration requested \$9.7 million for the five Multinational Species Conservation Funds managed by your International Affairs Office. What was the justification for this funding level?

Ms. SAITO. Mr. Chairman, the budget is usually developed taking into consideration the Service's, the Department's, and the President's priorities.

And while the Multinational Species Conservation Program is meritorious, it is considered among all other priorities and program needs of the larger organization and so what Congress is able to appropriate for these funds, we try to make the most effective use of them.

Mr. FLEMING. OK. All right. Thank you.

Dr. Stoinski, what is the current conservation status of the five species of great apes that are eligible to receive funding under the Great Ape Conservation Fund?

Dr. STOINSKI. They are all considered endangered, which means that they are considered to have a very high risk of extinction in the near future or critically endangered, which means that the risk is even more great.

Western gorillas are labeled as critically endangered, Eastern gorillas as endangered. Sumatran orangutan are critically endangered. Bornean orangutans are endangered, Chimpanzees are endangered and bonobos are endangered.

121Mr. FLEMING. OK. Again, a similar question. The Obama Administration requested \$1.9 million for the Great Ape Conservation Fund in Fiscal Year 2012. Break down how you would spend these funds.

Dr. STOINSKI. I think from our experience and what we have seen in Africa, a critical element is having boots on the ground, is employing local Africans, local people to provide the protection that these animals need.

Most of these countries do not have enough funds to adequately outfit their national parks with rangers that go and do the antipoaching patrols, that guard these areas from the poachers that we have heard about. And so I think a significant portion of that funding goes to provide those boots on the ground, and at the same time it is a significant source of employment for people in these rural areas, which often suffer from very high levels of unemployment.

Mr. FLEMING. OK. Thank you. All right. My time is about up, so I will yield to the gentleman, the Ranking Member.

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you very much, Chairman Fleming.

Ms. Saito, Chairman Fleming just asked you how the Administration justifies the funding request for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund. Let me ask you the other side of the question.

How do these cuts, because there will be cuts in the money, a 19 percent cut. How would the cuts impact wildlife conservation on the ground in terms of the number of wildlife populations, species, range states and projects supported?

Ms. SAITO. Congressman, thank you for that question. The way that we manage the funds is that we identify priorities for the various species because we are aware of the needs, and many countries will submit proposals. We don't know in advance how many proposals we are going to get from any one country, so it is difficult to respond to what this would do to the range countries.

In terms of the funding cuts, we would be able to fund only a fewer number of projects. We try to focus on the projects that have the highest priorities of the species needs, and also we will consider whether or not there are matching funds to maximize dollars that we have.

Mr. SABLAN. All right. Thank you. Let me go to Mr. Somerhalder. Ian.

Mr. SOMERHALDER. That is easier.

Mr. SABLAN. What do you hear from Americans about why the international wildlife conservation is important to them?

Mr. SOMERHALDER. What I hear, and typically this is coming from a younger generation, a very important one, is that species conservation is without a doubt extremely important by virtue of several things. One of them is what I learned in Trinidad and Tobago is these turtles are worth more alive than they are dead. People pay to go see these turtles.

It props up local economies, provides protection for the species, brings people out of the Stone Age effectively—no offense—by

building hospitals and schools. There is a direct economic impact for the loss of these species, and it is, from what I gather from whom I speak to often and many, that it is invariably important to them. What is it going to cost us down the road? Well, it is going to be exponentially more.

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you. Mr. Robinson, if I may, sir? Can you tell us? Can you provide us with an example of how the Multinational Species Conservation Funds contribute to our national security by maybe stabilizing war-torn areas and providing jobs for people who might otherwise be hostile to the United States?

Dr. ROBINSON. Thank you. Thank you for that question. Let me just give an example from South Sudan. The Multinational Species Conservation Funds supported a survey of elephant populations in South Sudan in 2004. One of the consequences of that survey was a discovery of the largest mammal migration in Africa, a migration which probably was larger than the Serengeti migration.

That justified the Government of South Sudan, a newly independent nation, of allocating and putting as a high priority the protection of those wildlife resources. At the same time, it was sitting with tens of thousands of people under arms following a 20 year war.

The U.S., of course, has got strong strategic interests in South Sudan and in their independence. This survey and the recognition of the conservation value of this migration was critically important in taking a significant number of those people under arms and moving them through ranger training.

So we have taken a strong presence and reallocated their effort into conservation and into much better governance and a much more stable rural countryside, and I think that is very much in our U.S. strategic interest.

Mr. SABLAN. My time has come, Mr. Chairman, but I would like to say that growing up I once told my daughter actually that we are related to the apes, and she asked me which side of the family, mine or her mother's? So the mother said no, it is your dad's family, but thank you.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman. I won't weigh in on that. We have had similar discussions in my family. Thank you.

Let us see. Next up is Mr. Faleomavaega, the gentleman from Samoa.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to commend the members of the panel for their most eloquent statements this morning.

I have been listening very closely in terms of the testimonies, and, first of all, I definitely want to commend Mr. Ian Somerhalder for the tremendous job that you are doing not only with your foundation, but with your commitment in conservation.

Mr. SOMERHALDER. Thank you very much.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. It was last year that another one of your colleagues, Mr. Pierce Brosnan, was also here and wanted to save the whales. I think you should do more to encourage more of your colleagues in the acting industry to be involved.

Mr. SOMERHALDER. I shall.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I have always said the good Lord must have some reason for having these animals to be with us on this planet.

It is certainly not to kill them. I have a very real, soft spot in my heart making sure that we do these things.

I do want to commend you, Mr. Chairman. You have been very gracious. I thought that maybe you would have at least one or two witnesses that would seriously question the budgetary allocations in terms of why we should be spending money for these kinds of projects and saving animals, but you have been very gracious. I was looking forward to maybe one of the witnesses would come out slashing and cutting and saying that we don't need the money to do this kind of activity.

I would like to ask Ms. Saito, and again I am not a mathematician, Ms. Saito, but for every dollar that we spend for the conservation efforts that these three pieces of legislation provide, what does it do positively for the world community as far as these animals? Why should we save these animals?

Ms. SAITO. Thank you, Mr. Congressman, for that question. I think we have good reasons for wanting to save these animals. One of the things that Congressman Miller mentioned was that these funds really help the recipients help manage their own resources, which we think is really important.

A lot of the recipients of these awards, some of them are willing to risk their lives, put their lives on the line in order to protect these species. In Virunga National Park—that is one of Africa's oldest parks—160 rangers have lost their lives protecting the wildlife in that park.

Their only concern is that they have to leave their wives and their families without any support. They don't get any support from their government, so they are concerned about that, but yet they carry on because they really believe that protecting these animals is so important.

Mr. FALCOMA. And I know again from the side of understanding and trying to appreciate this in terms of what kind of commitment these countries have themselves, I appreciate the fact that some of these people at the risk of their lives would do these kinds of things to preserve or to save these animals.

And realizing too the economics of some of these countries are so poor. They just don't have the resources to do the kind of things that we are able to do. That also raises a question of problems as to why should we be doing this? Why don't these countries themselves be committed, as committed as we are? We don't have elephants here in America. We don't have gorillas here in America.

Why should we be committed in doing the very thing that other countries don't seem to be at all concerned? Or maybe they are concerned, but I think it comes down to the point where they just don't have the resources to do the work. Am I wrong on this?

Ms. SAITO. That is correct. Many countries do not have the skills to manage their own wildlife, and I think the Multinational Species Conservation Funds really puts an emphasis on capacity building in those areas, helping these countries gain the skills they need.

Mr. FALCOMA. I am sorry, Ms. Saito. My time is going to get a little close.

Ms. SAITO. OK.

Mr. FALCOMA. I just want to say thank you, and I want to commend Mr. Diez. I know something about turtles because I am

from the islands myself. It is the most beautiful experience of being with these beautiful animals.

The bottom line, Mr. Chairman and to our distinguished witnesses, is we have a moral obligation to save and to do everything that we can to conserve and to preserve these beautiful animals, and I yield back.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman. Next is the gentlelady from Guam.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will begin my questions, but before I do I would like to state my strong support for the three bills before the Committee today, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization, the Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization and the Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act.

I have always been a strong advocate for wildlife preservation here in the United States and around the world, and the passage of these bills will ensure the United States continue to exert the leadership on multinational conservation issues.

I want to thank both you, Mr. Chairman, and of course our Ranking Member, Mr. Sablan, for calling this important hearing today, and I also want to thank our distinguished witnesses for your testimony in support of these matters.

My first question is to Ms. Saito. Does the Department support the approach of permitting grants for marine turtle conservation projects in the U.S. territories? It seems to me to mean increased competitiveness for the grants, maximizing the return on the dollar for the program and allows for appropriate cooperation in protecting these migratory species. So does the Department see it this way?

Ms. SAITO. Congresswoman, thank you for that question. In our testimony, written testimony, we did address that; that the Department would support having 20 percent of the funds go for freshwater turtles, but we would like to see that being used worldwide, not just for U.S. freshwater turtles.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you. That is on the record. All right.

My second question or my third is to Mr. Diez. One reason we propose expanding the scope of the Marine Turtle Conservation Program to include the United States and the territories is the mere fact that turtles nest on the shorelines of all the U.S. territories, as well as the coastal states and the Gulf of Mexico from South Padre Island in Texas to the Florida Keys, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and of course Guam and all of the other territories.

We join 27 different nation states geographically in the Caribbean Sea, and this fact emphasizes the importance of international cooperation in species conservation. Sea turtles are highly migratory, and partnerships between the governments of the Caribbean Islands are crucial for across-the-board efforts.

Puerto Rico positions the U.S. to be a leader in the Caribbean. Can you enlighten the Subcommittee, Mr. Diez, on the partnerships that the Puerto Rico Government has formed with neighboring islands and countries? This happens to be a question that Mr. Pierluisi asked me to ask.

Mr. DIEZ. Thank you. Definitely. Puerto Rico, as you mentioned, we are kind of one of the Greater Antilles so we share this resource with the other islands. As you have seen in my presentation, it is evident that turtles from Puerto Rico go to different places in the Caribbean.

Indeed, our agency has established several programs, collaborative programs with neighbor countries such as the Dominican Republic. Just a few weeks ago we were there, invited by the Dominican Republic to conduct workshops and train technicians. In the past we have also been collaborating with other countries such as Panama and Bonaire, Lesser Antilles.

So we have been very active in doing that, but again the reason we want this reauthorization bill is because we need to continue sponsoring this type of measures. Some of these countries, they have some money, but we need to match them up to be able to complete the program. But definitely we are working on that with the few financial funding that we have.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you. Thank you very much.

I have a question for John Robinson, Dr. Robinson. On Tuesday of this week an art dealer in Philadelphia was charged with smuggling in about a ton of ivory, representing hundreds of poached African elephants. How does the Multinational Species Conservation Fund contribute to stopping wildlife crime?

Dr. ROBINSON. Maybe my answer could reflect and just focus on elephants indeed because the Multinational Species Conservation Funds directly support a lot of law enforcement monitoring at sites where elephants occur.

They support information gathering by informant networks in surrounding communities, information which tends to flow to government agencies in various countries, and the funds support interdiction efforts not directly, but the interdiction efforts of a lot of national level government agencies, so very much directly supporting law enforcement that deals with the international wildlife trade.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you. Thank you very much. I want to thank the Chairman. I am sitting in the Ranking position now so I asked him for a little bit more time, so I thank you very much and I yield back.

Mr. FLEMING. The gentlelady yields back. Next is Mr. Miller, the gentleman from California.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank all of the witnesses for their participation and for their testimony and for their support. I have just a couple of questions.

One, Dr. Robinson, you suggested that you would like to see this one authorization, the three programs moved together. Is that consistent with the rest of the members of the panel? Does anybody have an objection to that?

[No response.]

Mr. MILLER. Thank you. It probably makes for an easier administration in the sense of how you spend your resources efficiently if we were to do that.

Mr. Hosmer, I want to thank you very much for being here this morning on behalf of the Safari Club. I said I was in Kenya. I was actually in Zimbabwe with the Campfire Program when I was spending time with the antipoaching forces there. I supported

Campfire from the inception and think that it has made some positive changes. So thank you very much for being here.

Mr. Somerhalder, thank you so much for being here. I think one of the great strengths of these programs—I wear another hat in Congress, and that is I am the senior Democrat on the Education Committee. These programs also provide a great education platform for young people in our schools, about introduction to sciences, a whole range of sciences that they never saw were interconnected, but in the materials that are produced are really quite remarkable.

I had the opportunity to be at the Bronx Zoo and watch the education programs on site at the Bronx Zoo, but then go into the science high school in Harlem and see the science programs that were developed there and biology and zoology and seeing young people knit all of this together, so that is one of the spinoffs that we see on this side of the Atlantic, if you will, that is really very, very exciting, and the real-time presentation of what is going on in the field is also I think very, very exciting.

I have to say, Mr. Chairman, obviously we are concerned about demonstrating the benefits and any kind of cost/ benefit analysis. Something else happens here too that I see maybe a little bit more domestically sometimes within the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, but very often if you go to somebody and say I am from the Federal government here and I want to talk to you about the use of your lands or what we might do here for wetlands or what have you, you don't get a good response.

But we have also created a whole range of intermediaries, whether it is Ducks Unlimited or California Waterfowl or different organizations or Fossey Foundation where they have created a number of people who can make other points of contact and talk to people I don't mean in the same language as in language-language, but in the context of culture and in the context of heritage and in the context of history.

Very often what we have seen, certainly in creating habitat in the Central Flyway and the Western Flyway, is people have stepped up and said I will do you one better. If I can do this in my family's name and we can live here as long as we are here, you can have it all. Just do it in the name. We want to do this for the flyways or what have you.

So there are really all of these other interactions that take place that it is hard to describe a value to, but when the Government of South Sudan that has a million things on their mind, somebody has to find a way to ask them a question so they can respond in real time because you have to have the answer now. I think that is what we are seeing here.

So as much as the U.S. Government brings its credibility, it brings its stability, it creates other avenues where you may not want the government asking that question or people won't respond to it because of the politics. That is one of the exciting things that I have seen on the ground over the years with these organizations.

Yes, there are some very wealthy people that give huge amounts of money to all of these organizations, but they also want to see us have some skin in the game and the organizational aspects that the government brings or the foundations bring to this.

So this to me has always been the most exciting. I wish I could do some of this more so in Education in terms of leverage and involvement, one of the most exciting things I have seen develop in the Federal government in my time here because of the resources.

The idea that Ian—I will use his first name here. That he would have the ability to transmit to another generation the magnificence and the importance of these species and the care of these species and the responsibility. All of those words are very important in the rest of their lives, but if they can figure out the responsibility and the care and the importance here that is a huge gift that this poor, old eight-ball there didn't know he was getting involved in, but it is quite remarkable I think if we can see it.

You know, you think about Hyatt or Hilton. Gee, if they locate and people can swim with the turtles or something they would think they have a gold mine. Let us remember, these are economic engines for these nations in many ways, and I think that was the point of Campfire. It sounds like a very strange tradeoff, but at that time there wasn't anything else going on at that moment in Zimbabwe. Actually everything that was going on was wrong in terms of the interest of these species.

So this is a crazy quilt that has been knit together with this really small pot of Federal resources, but an exciting one.

Thank you. You have been very generous with your time, Mr. Chairman. I hope we can work together to get this legislation to the Floor and to the President's desk. Thank you so very much for your interest and your concern.

Mr. FLEMING. I thank the gentleman. Certainly I think there is a consensus that probably the best leverage of Federal dollars that certainly I have seen is what happens in these programs. No question about it. You get two for one with private dollars, and we get tremendous benefits from what is relatively a low amount of expenditures compared to everything else. Everything around here starts with a B or a T. It is always nice to see one that starts with an M.

We have just a few more questions, so if you will hang with us for just another brief round? I want to follow up on what Ms. Bordallo was referring to, and that is that a ton of ivory was confiscated. How many elephants is represented by a ton of ivory? Is there any calculus on that?

Dr. ROBINSON. Of course, it depends a little bit on the size of the tusk, but we are probably dealing with a couple hundred animals.

Mr. FLEMING. OK. So that is a remarkable number. Now, I haven't traveled in Asia since the late 1970s, but I remember both in Hong Kong and also mainland China and other places virtually any retail store you went to there was a tremendous amount of ivory and beautiful ivory pieces that had been formed and fashioned into very decorative items. Would I see that today if I traveled in Asia?

Dr. ROBINSON. You would actually see a fair bit of it. A lot of it probably would be illegal, although meant to be illegal. The amount of ivory carving though is significantly less than it once was.

There have been one-off sales of confiscated ivory from range state countries. That is legal. So there is a fair bit of ivory still on the market and still a fair bit of ivory being carved.

Mr. FLEMING. Because obviously as long as there is a market for it there is going to be a drive because ultimately it is a financial equation for many.

What about the buy-in from other countries? You know, we are contributing. We have certainly our private partners in this. We have the countries themselves cooperating with us. What about other countries that can afford to help out? Are we getting buy-in from them? Anyone?

Dr. ROBINSON. I am sorry to keep monopolizing these answers. What we are seeing actually in a number of countries is the very fact that the U.S. Government involvement in some of these efforts is really triggering a recognition that wildlife conservation is hugely important.

I have just come back from Thailand where the government is doing some very, very significant antipoaching against tiger poaching. There is a level of commitment that we have never seen in the past, and I think it is related directly to exactly these issues.

Mr. FLEMING. So you would feel and your suggestion is that if the U.S. were to for some reason not be involved other countries that are today would perhaps not be involved or disengage in some way?

Dr. ROBINSON. Yes. I mean, the tiger issue is actually a very important one. The Multinational Species Conservation Fund supported tiger conservation at a time when tiger conservation was not in vogue.

There was significant pickup politically around the world. There was the St. Petersburg Tiger Summit that was hosted by Prime Minister Putin in November, and yet the intellectual imprint of the U.S. in pushing forward tiger conservation is significant and continuing. The U.S. was not an official partner at that summit, but our fingerprints were all over it.

Mr. FLEMING. OK. I thank the gentleman. I yield then to Ms. Bordallo for her questioning.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing a second round here.

I would like to add to what the Chairman talked about, ivory being sold, figurines, jewelry. When I first came to Guam, my home, right after the war I did see a lot of ivory in stores, but you don't see as much as you did in those days, and that was way back in 1948, 1949, 1950.

But when I was Chair of this particular Committee in the last Congress, one of our witnesses was the CEO of Tiffany's, and because there is a lot of concern about destroying coral—we had a number of bills that we were hearing—he came to testify. Tiffany's today does not sell any coral jewelry.

So I think if we get out there and try to talk to some of these people they would suspend selling this precious like ivory, coral and other things, but I just wanted to add that to what you were talking about.

I do have a question for Director Saito. Some have criticized these conservation funds as an unwise use of taxpayers' money. However, I understand these programs are able to significantly leverage their resources with outside matching funds.

So could you speak to the value and the effectiveness of these species conservation funds, particularly with regard to other conservation programs?

Ms. SAITO. May I ask for a clarification when you reference other conservation programs?

Ms. BORDALLO. That is correct.

Ms. SAITO. Any conservation programs?

Ms. BORDALLO. Any.

Ms. SAITO. OK. I think that one of the real values of the Multinational Species Funds is that we are able to have private/public partnerships that have really worked well, and these private partnerships have brought money to the table at a rate of roughly \$1 is matched with another \$1.50, so you are seeing many organizations chipping in money to help fund these projects.

When we have a call for proposals we are looking for proposals that have matching funding attached to them because that is another way that we can leverage the funds, the few funds that we have, so this is a really important feature of the Multinational Species Conservation Funds.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you. For Dr. Robinson again, can you provide an example of how the Multinational Species Conservation Funds supports United States development goals by improving local livelihoods, health and opportunities for women and youth?

Dr. ROBINSON. I think there is a pretty tight correlation between wildlife and human livelihoods. Wildlife can provide benefits, and Mr. Diez gave some very nice examples of sea turtles providing benefits in Puerto Rico. Wildlife also is a threat sometimes to human livelihoods, and some of the conservation funds have been used to deal with the conflict actually between wildlife and people in landscapes.

Elephants, for instance, have a very strong negative impact on crops if those crops are near protected areas, and the funds have supported a whole range of programs aimed at mitigating the impact, mitigating that conflict between elephants and people. Once you can mitigate that impact and actually generate benefits from the elephant conservation then people support that elephant conservation, and of course that has direct impacts on livelihoods. It has especially direct impact on women who do much of the work in those agricultural landscapes.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, Doctor.

And one last question, which I am sure that all of us are very curious about, and it is for Ian Somerhalder. How did you come to care about international wildlife conservation?

Mr. SOMERHALDER. Thank you for that question. I am from the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, and due to when you grow up in an ecosystem as delicate as that you obviously learn a very quick appreciation. It is familial. It is environmental.

In the wake of the BP oil spill last year I realized that the balance that we are all hanging in has gotten to a point where it is so drastic and somewhat dire that I could not sit around and watch anymore. It is much better to be proactive.

I understand that I have such a youth outreach component, so if you can create generational change, if you can instill in youth what we are all talking about right now, then I think what you

have is an entire new generation of sort of foot soldiers of conservation.

When you make young people understand that clean air, water, food and medicine are not only just national security risks to the United States, but to every nation, to every family and essentially every person.

Ms. BORDALLO. Well, thank you very much, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me a few extra questions.

Mr. FLEMING. OK. I thank the gentleman. Mr. Miller?

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have been very generous with your time.

I would just like to ask unanimous consent that a letter from Dr. Jane Goodall in support of this legislation be made a part of this hearing record.

Mr. FLEMING. OK. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you.

[The letter from Dr. Goodall follows:]

**Statement of Jane Goodall, Ph.D., DBE, Founder,
The Jane Goodall Institute & UN Messenger of Peace**

Dear Chairman Fleming and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for inviting me to testify at this very important hearing. While my schedule unfortunately prevents me from speaking in person today, I am grateful for the opportunity to submit this statement in strong support of Congressman George Miller's legislation, H.R. 1760, "The Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2011."

The Great Ape Conservation Fund, established by this Act, has supported numerous successful projects to address the protection of apes, including gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees, bonobos and gibbons.

But there is still a great deal to be done if we are to stop, or even slow, their march towards extinction.

Since its creation, the Great Ape Conservation Fund has supported enormously efficient and cost effective programs. Of course, a dollar goes a lot further in many developing countries than it does in the U.S. But even more significant is the fact that a relatively small amount of federal investment in the fund has leveraged a great deal of public and private contributions.

In large part due to the support of the U.S. government, the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) has been able to attract additional funding from a variety of other sources in the U.S. and in foreign countries. For example, U.S. funds have helped JGI pioneer a successful program in Tanzania to address deforestation by working with local communities. This U.S. commitment led the Royal Norwegian Embassy in 2009 to award JGI a \$2.7 million grant to expand this work to a much larger chimpanzee habitat to the south. Without the leverage from U.S. support, we could not pursue the integrated approach to conservation that we know is the only hope for saving chimpanzees and a host of other species. We are able to help local communities living near chimpanzee habitat make a living in ways that do not destroy the forest and improve their lives so that they do not transmit disease to the chimpanzees. This approach is good for the chimpanzees, for the local communities and, indeed, for all of us.

As the threats to great apes mount, the need for support far outstrips the amount of funding available.

Habitat loss from the extraction of lumber, minerals and other natural resources for the manufacture of commercial products; rapidly increasing local populations who are struggling to survive; hunting for the commercial, illegal bushmeat and pet trades; human-wildlife conflicts; and outbreaks of deadly disease are some of the gravest pressures facing great apes.

Yet, the potential benefits of supporting great ape protection are increasing, as well. Grants through the Great Ape Conservation Fund have supported projects such as wild ape research, efforts to monitor the health of wildlife, and work to halt the trade and consumption of illegal, commercial bushmeat, which has been linked to disease transmission between humans and wildlife. By protecting ecosystems, the fund also protects natural pharmacological ingredients. The prescription drugs made from these ingredients have widespread health benefits and are a major driver of

U.S. economic growth. More than half of the most prescribed medications in the U.S. contain an ingredient derived from nature.

Programs supported by the fund also have helped to advance U.S. security goals by stabilizing communities in areas of the world often fraught with conflict and where governments remain fragile. These programs create job opportunities and development within these regions, reducing the chances of conflict while opening up foreign markets to U.S. trade. In addition, by focusing governments and communities on a common cause, conservation efforts can build diplomatic relationships and help to prevent conflict.

Finally, great apes themselves promote the health and diversity of ecosystems. Great apes help to disperse the seeds of the fruits they eat, eliminating them on new ground. This underpins entire ecological communities. By protecting great ape habitat, we are also protecting the myriad of species that share the same ecosystems as the apes and the natural products that millions of people depend on for survival. In the Congo Basin, where four of the five great ape species live, the forests provide food, shelter and livelihoods for many of the region's 60 million people.

Thus, while the plight of great apes in Africa or Asia may seem far away, their fate should concern us all. Measures to protect great apes impact our health, security, environment and more.

Finally, I cannot speak about chimpanzees without mentioning what to me is so important—the fact that there is still so much to learn about and from chimpanzees and other great apes. As I have said on previous occasions, future generations will not easily forgive us if we allow the great apes to become extinct on our watch. Please take this into account as you consider this important legislation.

Thank you for allowing me to contribute to this hearing. I applaud Congressman Miller for taking the lead on it and Chairman Fleming for calling this hearing so that I and others can explain why it is so important.

Mr. FLEMING. Additionally, for the record, we have a letter or actually testimony from Mr. Jack Hanna, whom we all know, a letter from Kenneth Feld, a statement by Jane Goodall, as well as a letter, and also a letter represented by 24 conservation groups. I offer that to be submitted to the record. No objection, so ordered.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hanna follows:]

Statement of Jack Hanna, Director Emeritus, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, on H.R. 50, H.R. 1760, and H.R. 1761

Thank you Chairman Hastings, Ranking Member Markey, and the members of the House Committee on Natural Resources for allowing me to provide testimony about three critically important bills, H.R. 50, H.R. 1760, and H.R. 1761, which would reauthorize programs benefitting some of the most well-known and threatened species in the world.

My love for animals is a lifelong passion. As a boy I worked for our family's veterinarian. I worked at the Central Florida Zoo in the mid-1970s, and in 1978, I became director of the Columbus Zoo. During my time there we increased attendance in part by focusing on events that would engage and educate the public about animals they probably would never have the opportunity to see in person if not for zoos and aquariums. Since 1992 I have been Director Emeritus at the Columbus Zoo which allows me the time to focus on additional efforts that increase awareness about animals and cultures from all parts of the globe.

I want to note the extraordinary efforts of the nation's accredited zoos and aquariums in conserving wildlife. With 178 million visitors to 223 accredited zoos and aquariums each year, these institutions connect people with animals. According to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), accredited zoos and aquariums have provided more than \$90,000,000 per year over the past 5 years to support more than 4,000 field conservation and research projects in more than 100 countries. Zoos and aquariums also are critical partners in rescue, rehabilitation, confiscation, and reintroduction efforts for distressed, threatened, and endangered species.

More than twenty years ago, AZA established the Species Survival Plan (SSP) program—a long-term plan involving genetically diverse breeding, habitat preservation, public education, field conservation and supportive research to ensure survival for many threatened and endangered species. SSP species are often “flagship species,” well-known animals such as the giant panda, California condor, and lowland gorilla. There are currently more than 300 SSP Programs.

The bills before the Committee today for its review—H.R. 50, the “Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2011,” H.R. 1760, the “Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2011,” and H.R. 1761, the “Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2011”—are vital to the successful sustainability of some of the greatest animal species. I want to commend the sponsors of these bills, Representatives Don Young, George Miller, and Pedro Pierluisi, as well as the cosponsors, for their leadership on species protection.

We know that these animals face significant challenges including deforestation, poaching, and development in their habitats. The funds provided by Congress have served as the catalyst for the implementation of hundreds of projects worldwide ranging from highly sophisticated and innovative data collection, tracking, research and monitoring programs to providing essential on-the-ground resources to game wardens and law enforcement officials who have been entrusted to protect these magnificent animals from the dangers that they face daily. These programs also recognize the value of promoting cooperative projects among government entities, NGOs and the affected local communities in the range states.

In addition, these programs have leveraged more than three times the U.S. federal investment through matching contributions from public and private partners. These funds have also been effectively and efficiently managed and distributed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. During these difficult economic times of budgetary challenges, it is precisely these types of programs that deserve Congress’s support.

Again, I want to thank Chairman Hastings, Ranking Member Markey, and the members of the committee for your past support of wildlife conservation, and I look forward to working with you in the future on these very important issues.

Thank you.

Mr. FLEMING. I am reminded by my staff associate here, Mr. Burroughs, that the slogan back in the 1970s was that only elephants should wear ivory, and certainly that is something we should take away from today.

Also, I would like to ask the members of the panel—I came in late because of a meeting that ran late in the Capitol—I haven’t had a chance to meet any of you. Some of the Members on the dais here may also, so if you have a moment to stick around after adjournment we would appreciate that as well.

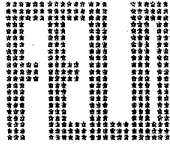
If there are no other questions, I would like to thank all the witnesses today for your valuable testimony and contributions. Members of the Subcommittee may have additional questions for the witnesses, and we ask that you respond to these in writing. The hearing record will open for 10 days to receive these responses.

I want to thank Members and staff for their contributions to this hearing. If there is no further business, without objection the Subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:51 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Additional material submitted for the record follows:]

[A letter submitted for the record by Kenneth J. Feld, Chairman and CEO, Entertainment, Inc., follows:]



ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

July 26, 2011

KENNETH J. FELD
Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer

The Honorable Don Young
United States House of Representatives
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Young:

I am writing in strong support of H.R. 50, the legislation you have sponsored to reauthorize the Asian Elephant Conservation Act, the African Elephant Conservation Act and the Rhino-Tiger Conservation Act. The contributions made by this legislation to enhancing the survival of these majestic species are significant and undeniable. I also want to thank you for your longstanding and ongoing leadership in support of international species conservation.

As you know, Feld Entertainment, Inc. and *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey*^{*} have long supported Conservation Acts and the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF). Our support goes back to 1997 when we proudly worked alongside you, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums in support of the original Asian Elephant Conservation Act (AECA). In the fourteen years since enactment of the AECA, the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund has had a very real and positive impact on Asian elephant conservation. Working with relatively modest funds, the Fund has been able to contribute to an impressive number of research and conservation projects, often focusing on projects that directly support and promote local capacity building programs that have long-term benefits. The same is true for the African Elephant and Rhino-Tiger Conservation Funds. Perhaps most important, the MSCF is able to leverage crucial federal dollars to attract significant levels of non-federal funds, making it a highly cost-effective federal program.

Congressman Don Young
July 27, 2011
Page 2 of 2

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey has always had an unyielding commitment to the future of the endangered Asian elephant, and we currently care for more than 50 Asian elephants, the largest herd outside of Southeast Asia. That is why in 1995 we established the *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Center for Elephant Conservation*^{*} (CEC). Built on over 141 years of experience and expertise of working with elephants and exotic animals, the *Ringling Bros. CEC* is dedicated to the conservation, breeding and understanding of these amazing animals. We work with zoos and elephant experts around the world to further the survival of Asian elephants. In addition, *Ringling Bros.* directly supports research at facilities across the country that is crucial to both the survival of Asian elephants and to increasing their propagation in North America. We also work with range country governments and facilities to, among other things, help improve the care and well-being of the thousands of captive and domesticated elephants that are found throughout Asia.

Ringling Bros. remains committed to Asian elephant conservation, and the federal species conservation funds will continue to be a vital tool for ensuring the survival of the Asian elephant and other endangered species around the world. Our dedication to Asian elephants is even reflected in the motto of the *Ringling Bros. CEC*, "Endangered species: not if we can help it" and passage of H.R. 50 is an important part of accomplishing that same important goal. I urge Congress to quickly pass H.R. 50 to ensure the continuation of the critical work done through the funds established by these acts.

Respectfully,

Kenneth J. Feld
Chairman and CEO

[A letter submitted for the record by the Multinational Species Coalition on H.R. 50, H.R. 1760, and H.R. 1761 follows:]

MULTINATIONAL SPECIES COALITION



*African Wildlife Foundation • Association of Zoos and Aquariums • Bonobo Conservation Initiative
Born Free USA • Chelonian Research Foundation • Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International
Feld Entertainment, Inc. • Humane Society of the United States • Humane Society International
Cheetah Conservation Fund • International Crane Foundation • International Elephant Foundation
International Fund for Animal Welfare • International Rhino Foundation • Jane Goodall Institute
The Nature Conservancy • Rare Species Fund • Safari Club International
Sea Turtle Conservancy • Sierra Club • The WILD Foundation • Wildlife Alliance
Wildlife Conservation Society • World Wildlife Fund*

July 26, 2011

Representative John Fleming
Chair, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Fleming:

We are writing in support of reauthorization of the African Elephant, the Rhinoceros and Tiger, and the Asian Elephant Conservation Acts (H.R. 50), the Great Ape Conservation Act (H.R. 1760), and the Marine Turtle Conservation Act (H.R. 1761). These conservation acts make up the Multinational Species Conservation Funds (MSCF) which are a small but vital program funded through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In a recently released economic impact report by the Department of the Interior, the MSCF was listed as generating 207 U.S. jobs and \$22.6 million in economic impact from its FY2010 appropriated funds of \$11.5 million. We applaud the leadership of Representatives Don Young, George Miller and Pedro Pierluisi in introducing these bills. We also recognize congressional leadership in addressing grave needs faced by sea turtles species occurring in the United States and efforts to address them through a new provision in H.R. 1761 carving out a portion of the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund (MTCF). While the MTCF has been dedicated to international sea turtle conservation, we look forward to working with the Subcommittee to balance U.S. government investment in sea turtles both in the U.S. and globally. We further request a dialogue in this regard which would support your efforts to expeditiously enact this legislation in this Congress.

Fish and Wildlife conservation programs are a modest but essential piece of the United States' engagement with the developing world. Through the MSCF program, the United States supplements the efforts of developing countries that are struggling to balance the needs of their human populations and wildlife. MSCF programs help to sustain wildlife populations, address threats by controlling poaching, reduce human-wildlife conflict, and protecting essential habitat. In partnership with local communities, these programs also improve the livelihoods of people through increased tourism, better land use management, and greater opportunities for health and educational services. Our national security directly benefits from these programs which help create regional stability, especially in the world's most impoverished regions.

In this tough budgetary climate, the MSCF is a fiscally responsible investment which has been extraordinarily successful at leveraging partnerships with corporations and non-governmental organizations to magnify its effectiveness. Although the MSCF amounts to 0.02 percent of all U.S. foreign assistance, which is only 1.3 percent of the annual federal budget, some of these programs have leveraged nearly three times the U.S. federal investment through matching contributions from public and private partners. In doing so, the MSCF has successfully helped stabilize or increase key populations of tigers in the Russian Far East, elephants and rhinos in Africa and Asia, and gorillas in East Africa.

The MSCF provides significant and measurable successes for a very small investment of federal dollars. By improving the livelihoods of local communities in developing countries, we help create a foundation of regional stability that directly supports our national security and foreign policy priorities. These programs have broad support from sportsmen, conservationists, zoos, circuses, veterinarians, and animal welfare groups. We encourage you to support the reauthorization of this program by facilitating the passage of H.R. 50, H.R. 1760 and H.R. 1761 in the 112th Congress.

Sincerely,

John F. Calvelli
Executive Vice President, Public Affairs
Wildlife Conservation Society

Joseph Hosmer
President
Safari Club International Foundation

Ginette Hemley
Senior Vice President
Conservation Strategy and Science
World Wildlife Fund

Tom Albert
Vice President,
Feld Entertainment, Inc

Robert Bendick,
Director, U.S. Government Relations
The Nature Conservancy

Maureen P. Smith
President
Jane Goodall Institute

Deborah Olson
Executive Director
International Elephant Foundation

Jim Maddy
President and CEO
Association of Zoos and Aquariums

Michael Zwirn
Director, U.S. Operations
Wildlife Alliance

Susie Ellis, Ph.D.
Executive Director
International Rhino Foundation

Patrick Bergin
President and CEO
African Wildlife Foundation

Dr. Teresa Telecky,
Director of Wildlife
Humane Society International

Laurie Marker, Ph.D.
Founder and Executive Director
Cheetah Conservation Fund

Sally Jewell Coxe
President
Bonobo Conservation Initiative

Tara S. Stoinski, Ph.D.
Manager of Conservation Partnerships
Zoo Atlanta
The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund
International

Vance Martin
President,
The WILD Foundation

Athan Manuel
Director, Lands Protection Program
Sierra Club

Jeffrey Flocken,
Director, Washington D.C. Office
International Fund for Animal Welfare

Richard Belfuss, Ph.D.
President & CEO
International Crane Foundation

Anders Rhodin
Executive Director
Chelonian Research Foundation

David Godfrey
Executive Director
Sea Turtle Conservancy

Adam Roberts
Senior Vice President
Born Free USA

Dr. Bhagavan Antle
Founder
Rare Species Fund

Dr. John Grandy,
Senior VP Wildlife & Habitat Protection
Humane Society of the United States

