

2016

# Liberia Safari Operational Report



[ 2016 Season ]

Liberia Safari 2016 season operational report highlighting the company operations and achievement for the year.

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We, the management and staff of Liberia Safari, would like to seize the moment to say a big thank you to all players that contributed one way to another in making Liberia Safari 2016 season, January – June a resounding success.

Your ongoing contribution and dedication to the introduction of a new business venture, primarily aimed at the development of the Tourism Sector/ Service Industry, will go a long way ensuring that Liberia is seen as an ECO-FRIENDLY destination. Your hard work and efforts will result in far reaching benefits to all of Liberia and see development from the simple shuttle service driver at the Airport to the rural communities.

If we begin to mention the names of individuals as well as entities, it is obvious, that list will be endless, but at the same time it will be fair to give thumbs up to the following individuals because this season would not have been successful, had it not been the relentless efforts of the following individuals and entities:

The Management and staff of the Forestry Development Authority, particularly the Wildlife Division, for ensuring that we met all requirements and abide by all the rules governing safari game hunting in Liberia and the development of eco-friendly facilities.

Liberia Safari Manager, Morris Dougba presented the 2016 Lifetime Conservationist Award to Mr. Theo Freeman, Technical Manager of Conservation at the Forestry Development Authority, and Mr. Edward Gbenitor, Manager of Wildlife received the Liberia Safari's 2016 Wildlife Advocacy Award.



**Figure 1: Mr. Theo Freeman receiving his award**



**Figure 2: Mr. Edward Gbenitor receiving his award**

Commissioner Olu, Paramount Chief Kaifa Manjoe, elders and all the officials of the Korninga Clan/Chiefdom Development Association for all the support we received by playing their respective roles as enshrined the MOU between Liberia Safari and the Community.



**Figure 3: District Commissioner Olu, during the goat sharing ceremony in Gainkpa town.**

Our 10 tourists, who braved all the odds of post Ebola era to visit the jungle in Western Liberia. This step went a long way in rebuilding visitor confidence in Liberia, for if the influential and wealthy sport hunters are willing to visit our beloved country, it carries the knowledge that Liberia is a safe place to visit. This bold move will only serve to strengthen Liberia as an Ecotourism destination.



**Figure 4: Mr Rex Baker Sr.**

Mr. Rex Baker Sr. received Liberia Safari's All Time Professional Sport Hunter Award. Mr. Baker was supportive of Liberia Safari establishing a professional sport hunting business in Liberia. Mr. Baker is a proud sponsor of our goat project.



**Figure 5: Mr. Wilson Stout**

Mr. Wilson Stout received the Liberia Safari's Philanthropist of the Year Award. Mr. Stout sponsored the hand pump water and goat projects for the local community in which Liberia Safari operates.

## Achievements:

Safari Liberia is proud to be part of the development of the village to Environmental Stewards and they have already seen the importance of stopping of indiscriminate hunting by locals who just kill any and all animals, young, old and pregnant ones alike, unlike the sport hunters who only hunt the older male species.

During the period under reviewed, our company was able to set and accomplished a number of benchmarks priority projects, aimed at building community resilience and reduce their dependency, along with edification of the importance of the environment, flora and fauna, and conservation:

# Alternative Meat Sources and Community Self Empowerment:

## Goat Rearing Project

Liberia Safari through its clients, Mr. Rex Baker and Wilson Stout established a Community Goat Rearing Program to help provide an alternative source of protein to the village of Gainkpa. Liberia Safari through the generous contribution of our clients was able to purchase twenty-five goats for the Community, twenty female and five young male goats from Butuo, Nimba County, so two Towns benefitted the seller town and the recipient town.



**Figure 6: Recipients of Safari Liberia First Goat Rearing PAY IT FORWARD Project in Gbarpolu County**

Twenty elderly family heads in Gainkpa town received the twenty female goats to rear and the Chief received the five male goats. The intent of this project is to develop and make goat farmers through a goat revolving scheme. The custodian raises the female goats, which will be serviced by the male goats in the Chief's care. Once the female goats produce an offspring they get to keep it and turn over the original goat custodianship to another family head.

Liberia Safari strongly believed that this project, which has already begun to pay off, will eventually lead to the inhabitants of the town becoming goat farmers, which will be able to provide meat and manure, thereby reducing the demand for bush meat and empowering the villagers economically.

Liberia Safari would like to further extend this animal rearing project to include Country Chicken, Ducks, Pigs and Rabbits in the following years if feasible.



**PIGS**



**RABBITS**



**DUCKS**

## Community Farms

Liberia Safari further organized and supported the development of community farms. This project will help to improve the Liberia diet in these rural villages, provide fresh fruits and vegetables for local and tourist alike. As these community farms grow and develop they would also provide feed stock for animal rearing and raw materials for the production of biomass charcoal for cooking needs, thus adding to the village resilience and reduce its dependency on externalities for survival, especially during the rainy season when they can be cut off for long periods of time.



Figure 7: **Mr. Morris Dougba** establishing the Community Farm.

## Donation of School Supplies and Sporting Gears

In addition to the trophy fees collected and deposited in the General Revenue Account at LRA, car rental companies, hotels, souvenir shops as well as Arts & Crafts stores benefited from this tourism related business because these tourists bought goods and services from these entities. Like the world over, tourism business brings in clean dollars not only for the tour company that bring these tourists into the country but a long list of businesses stand to receive the piece of the pie. Almost, all the tourists were

encouraged to bring gifts of school items and other sporting goods for the students. We are proud to report that all of the schools in the district received gifts from the tourists in the form of school supplies and soccer balls.



Figure 8: Dr. Mike Adams handing out school supplies he brought for the pupils of Gainkpa Public School.

## Community Trust

In addition to the trophy fees deposited into government revenue, the Community received, for the period under review, \$2,145.00, which represents a 10% of the total sum paid to GOL, as a community forest usage fees.

## Donation of Smoked Meat

All of the smoked meat and \$2,000.00 from Liberia Safari as community's forest usage fees. Priority employment opportunities were ad hear as enshrined in the MOU. This contribution might appear little but in a community with 100% unemployment, this is a huge and significant impact this program is making. This initiative will also help to reduce the illegal hunting and destruction of the animal habitats

by hunters who just set a number of trap guns and other dangerous apparatus in the forest that can kill, both animal and person, indiscriminately.



Figure 9: Donation of smoked or dry meat to the community from the hunt of the tourists.

## Community Empowerment

Liberia safari also helps to make access to the village more easily affordable by purchasing and provided a Motorbike to one of the villagers in a work to pay program, as part of its commitment to community empowerment. Also, Safari Liberia donated \$LD15, 000 honoring a request from a women group to help cultivate a corn farm. As we published this document, we received information from the Lutheran Church women group in Henry's town that the corn was harvested and a total of two thousand pounds or one metric ton worth \$LD 35,000 were ready for the market.

## Community Environmental Stewards

These kind of community development programs initiated by Liberia Safari, will go a long way in developing community self reliance and reduce its vulnerability. The Forestry Development Authority is

highly under stress with the deployment of forest rangers that can monitor and reduce the illegal hunting of animals, with no direct benefits, relief or taxes coming to the community, local or central government. When the community knows that they can benefit from selective game hunting, they become community environmental stewards, who voluntarily give the time and effort to the protection of the environment and its flora and fauna, thereby reducing the cost to local and central government, while increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the forest ranger program.

This step will also help to educate the local villagers on the importance of the environment and develop them to hold new jobs as trail developers, service providers and tour guides with the development of the eco-resorts and tourism in the area, thereby improving the standard of living in these remote and isolated villages.

## Animal Conservation

Liberia Safari also started a wildlife animal conservation and rearing program. Liberia Safari purchased live baby animals from locals who killed the animal mothers, and rear them at its based camp. Further development of this program will see the enhancement of the wildlife in areas of Liberia, as a percentage of all animals reared will be released into the wild, to help rebuild the animal population in areas that are overhunted by locals.

Opponents of trophy hunting do not disagree that trophy hunting generates important revenue, but they will point out that ecotourism is an alternative model for generating that same revenue from wildlife animals, they will tell you, are worth more alive than dead.

The abovementioned program that Liberia Safari has implemented will help to bred the various species of animals and re-release them into the wild to ensure the survival of the species. It is possible for conservation and trophy hunting to coexist and further to supplement the development of Ecotourism resorts in the future.

## Illegal poaching is the real problem

Liberia's wildlife and endangered species is under such extreme threat from illegal poaching and indiscriminate hunting by locals, the message that the species needs saving has a larger problem to address than the relatively limited loss of animals to sport hunters.

Many folks agree that trophy hunting is a good model of animal welfare, if executed properly and with oversight and strict quotas, and it can be a useful wildlife management tool. Hunting may be among the few useful mechanisms for controlling unregulated populations that would expand with abandon given the relative absence of natural predators. In other places, the fees derived from legalized trophy hunting

can fund important conservation efforts on the ground. As WWF researcher, Robin Naidoo points out in a paper in the journal *Conservation Biology*, the Western opposition to trophy hunting is a bit ironic given how much funding legal hunting generates for wildlife management and conservation in North America.

Until the mid-1990s, wildlife in Namibia was thought of as a natural resource. All animals were owned by the government. But then, the government instituted a Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) program, which allows communities to register lands as “communal conservancies.” Registration allows locals to manage and benefit from the wildlife that lived on those conservancies. The CBNRM program is widely seen as the turning point for Namibia’s wildlife. Prior to its implementation, wildlife was in severe decline there, and now it’s one of the few places in Africa where wildlife appears to be increasing in numbers with everything considered. The CBNRM finally allowed local communities to benefit directly, both socially and economically, from the wildlife with whom they coexisted.

For both hunting and ecotourism, conservancies usually contract with private operators. Those contracts specify what percentage of revenue that is turn over to the conservancy. That amounts to some 8-12% of lodge revenue and 30-75% of a trophy price, depending on the species. Those funds used by conservancies to pay their operational and management costs, pay wildlife rangers and game guards, and to fund vehicle maintenance and fuel; remaining funds are distributed to various projects within local communities.

## Legal trophy hunting

In 2006, researcher Peter A. Lindsey of Kenya’s Mpala Research Centre and colleagues interviewed 150 people who had either already hunted in Africa, or who planned to do so within the following three years. The findings published in the journal *Animal Conservation*. Majority of hunters, eighty-six percent told the researchers they preferred hunting in an area where they knew that a portion of the proceeds went back into local communities. Nearly half of the hunters they interviewed also indicated that they be willing to pay an equivalent price for a poorer trophy if it was a problem animal that have to die anyway.

Lindsey’s team also discovered that hunters were more sensitive to conservation concerns than was perhaps expected. For example, they were less willing to hunt in areas where wild dogs or cheetahs are illegally shot. In countries that intentionally surpass their quotas, or with operators who practice “put-and-take hunting,” which is where trophy animals are release into a fenced-in property just before a hunt? Together this suggests that hunters were willing to place economic pressure on countries and tour companies to operate in an ethical manner as possible. Approximately nine out of every ten hunters said they were willing to hunt in places that were poor for wildlife viewing or which lacked attractive scenery. That is, they said that they were willing to hunt in areas that would not have otherwise been able to reap an economic benefit from ecotourism.

Better evidence would come from proof that hunting can be consistent with actual, measurable conservation-related benefits for a species.

Is there such evidence? According to a 2005 paper by Nigel Leader-Williams and colleagues in the *Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy* the answer is yes. Leader-Williams describe how the legalization of white rhinoceros hunting in South Africa motivated private landowners to reintroduce the species onto their lands. As a result, the country saw an increase in white rhinos from fewer than one hundred individuals to more than 11,000, even while a limited number were killed as trophies.

In a 2011 letter to *Science* magazine, Leader-Williams also pointed out that the implementation of controlled, legalized hunting was also beneficial for Zimbabwe's elephants. "Implementing trophy hunting has doubled the area of the country under wildlife management relative to the 13% in state protected areas," thanks to the inclusion of private lands, he says. "As a result, the area of suitable land available to elephants and other wildlife has increased, reversing the problem of habitat loss and helping to maintain a sustained population increase in Zimbabwe's already large elephant population

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