



Rodger Schlickeisen

President & Chief Executive Officer

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June 24, 2010

Prime Minister Raila Odinga
Prime Ministers Office
Treasury Building
P.O. Box 74434-00200
Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Prime Minister:

As the president of Defenders of Wildlife, one of the world's largest wildlife conservation organizations, I am writing to convey my serious concerns with the drastic decline in the African lion population, both in Kenya and throughout Africa. The Kenya Wildlife Service estimates the Kenyan lion population has declined from 2,749 in 2002 to approximately 2,000 in 2008¹. Leading lion expert, Laurence Frank, has stated "Lions are disappearing so fast from Kenya, as well as the rest of Africa, that I think they will disappear [from Kenya] in less than 10 years if action is not taken very quickly²."

I've just returned from a three week trip to Kenya and fortunately had the pleasure to see lions in the wild and to meet with a number of lion conservationists, including members of the Masai tribe who work as lion guardians. From these individuals, I learned that although the decline stems from several causes, the intentional poisoning of lions appears to be the current primary threat. This spring alone, at least 8 lions have been poisoned and killed in Kenya. Hippos, leopards and hyenas and other wildlife have also been victims of poisoning as have waterbirds, which are intentionally poisoned and then sold as food. The poison of choice is most often carbofuran.

Enclosed are recent photos showing some of the devastating effects of carbofuran poisoning. While one of the manufacturers of carbofuran, FMC Corporation, may have agreed to no longer export carbofuran to Kenya, the pesticide is now manufactured by other companies that have not made that promise. FMC's product may no longer be found on store shelves but old stocks remain and carbofuran is still imported into Kenya for sale to other neighboring African nations. Until a ban on the import and use of the pesticide is in place and strong action is taken to apprehend and prosecute those found guilty, lions and other wildlife will continue to be at serious risk.

Additional conservation measures are also needed, particularly those that address and minimize conflicts between humans and wildlife. Through our work in restoring and conserving the gray wolf and other large carnivores in the United States, Defenders of Wildlife has developed extensive expertise in developing, administering and financing highly successful compensation funds and promoting non-lethal means of co-existing with large carnivores. I plan on returning to Kenya within the year and would be very happy to make

¹ See

http://www.kws.org/export/sites/kws/info/news/2010/2010_download/Background_to_large_carnivores_in_Kenya.pdf

² See <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn17648-kenyas-lions-could-vanish-within-10-years.html?full=true&print=true>

myself available to meet with you and representatives from the Kenya Wildlife Service to discuss Defenders' work with large carnivores and how we can be of assistance with lion conservation.

Because of the toll carbofuran has taken on wildlife in the U.S., Defenders of Wildlife worked for decades to ban its use in the United States. The granular form of carbofuran – the form used in Kenya – was severely restricted in the U.S. in 1991 because of the millions of birds being killed each year from use in agricultural fields. To address the human safety concerns associated with carbofuran, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has more recently revoked all food tolerances for all forms of the pesticide, which means that no food grown in the U.S. or imported into the country can contain any residue of the pesticide. This revocation was effective December 31, 2009, and despite a legal challenge by FMC, it remains in effect. The EPA has also indicated its intent to cancel all uses of carbofuran in the United States pursuant to the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act in order to address risks to pesticide applicators and risks to birds in treated fields.

In 2007, the European Union withdrew authorizations for carbofuran by deciding not to include carbofuran in the approved list of active substances.³ Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency recently conducted the risk and value assessments for carbofuran and its end-uses on food and feed crops and also intends to ban the product⁴.

As you can see, these countries have taken action to limit the use of carbofuran largely due to the U.S. government's concerns about human health. We share this concern and believe there will be significant benefits to human health and safety from a decision to ban carbofuran -- not only to the farm workers who apply the chemical but also to those who eat foods containing residues of carbofuran.

Therefore, we urge you to learn from the mistakes of other countries in allowing the use of carbofuran for far too long, and to follow the lead of the United States, the European Union and Canada by taking immediate action to officially ban both the import and use of carbofuran in Kenya, and by working with neighboring countries to ensure that this chemical is not brought into the country illegally. These steps are critical if you are to protect the remaining lions in Kenya. As evidence of the strong public support in America for the protection of the African lion, please see the enclosed CD that lists the names of more than 142,000 Americans who signed petitions requesting that you enact a ban on carbofuran.

These and hundreds of thousands more Americans are all potential tourists to Kenya who won't be eager to visit your fine country if you don't take additional steps to stop lion poisoning. Thank you for your attention to this critical conservation issue.

Sincerely,



Rodger Schlickeisen

³ See European Commission Health & Consumer Protection Directorate, Review Report for the Active Substance Carbofuran (Sept. 7, 2007), available at

http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/protection/evaluation/existactive/list_carbofuran.pdf and

http://ec.europa.eu/sanco_pesticides/public/index.cfm?event=activesubstance.selection for a list of approved active substances.

⁴ Health Canada, Consultation Document on Carbofuran, available at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/part/consultations/prvd2009-11/carbofuran-eng.php>.