

Young black bear cub takes refuge in a cottonwood tree. Photo: Myron Kozak

Legal killing for sport or trophies, illegal killing for body parts and destruction of natural wilderness habitat leading to long-term decline of bear populations

A message from ANTHONY MARR

When I was a boy about ten years of age living in Hong Kong, I saw the live-skinning of a snake in a local meat market. I still vividly recall the pink, stripped body of the poor creature writhing for what seemed an eternity, tying knots around itself, while its human tormentors joked on unabatedly. Just as vividly, I remember the vow I made to myself: "When I grow up, I will help stop human cruelty Anthony saving bears for



against all living beings." young Christopher.

The BET'R Campaign, launched in the fall of 1995, is part of my fulfilment of this pledge. BETR stands for Bear, Elephant, Tiger and Rhinoceros, the four species of big terrestrial mammals most extensively exploited and, in fact, being driven to extinction primarily by the Oriental use of their body parts for medicinal and other purposes, by over-hunting in some of the countries in which big game hunting is still legal, as well as by the continuing destruction of their natural habitats.

I launched the BET'R campaign not in spite of my being of Chinese extraction, but because of it. My Chinese Canadian heritage allows me to challenge both cultures' age-old traditions head on, without racism accusations.

The BET'R Campaign addresses both supply and demand of the problem with a dual yang and yin strategy. The vang seeks a short-term interim solution via tougher laws and enforcement to both reduce poaching and suppress trafficking. It essentially buys time for the vin-the longterm fundamental solution via education and media to ultimately eliminate the demand for the use of animal parts in the various Asian as well as the Western cultures.

Regarding the "T" of the BET'R acronym: three of the original eight subspecies of tigers are now extinct, while the remaining five subspecies are all critically endangered. Also endangered are both species of elephants (African and Asian), all five species of rhinos, and four out of seven species of bears.

The cover of the March 1995 issue of TIME magazine featured a tiger upon whose visage was superimposed the title: DOOMED. We all know the meaning of that word,



Carcass of poached bear with gall and paws removed found near Fort Nelson, B.C. Photo: WCWC files.

but here is an additional dash of reality. I recently asked a conservationist from India whether he would bet on the future of the Bengal tiger surviving in the wild. He replied, "I would bet all that I own on the tiger's prosperity, but I think I'm going to lose."

He explained why. There are only 2,500 Bengal tigers left in India, and more than one a day are being lost to poachers. As to the other four sub-species, there are only 1,000 Indochinese tigers, 500 Sumatran tigers, 130 Siberian tigers, and 30 to 80 South China tigers remaining.

Rhinos are also on the brink of extinction. Fewer than 9,000 animals of all 5 species are left roaming the wild. By the year 2001, unless some major conservation efforts are made, the tigers and the rhinos will be extinct except for a few animals kept in zoos. This is a tragically unacceptable way to begin a new millennium.

"Gall and paw as well as head and hide are all bear parts. We cannot forcefully penalize those killing bears for their galls and paws when we legally condone the killing of bears for their heads and hides."

While the African elephant seems to be recovering somewhat, the tusks seized over the last few years show a steady decrease in size, indicating the demise of large males and the poaching, now, of females and adolescents. Regarding the Indian elephant, only males have tusks. They have been poached to the point where the male: female ratio is down to 1:80.

Of the world's seven species of bears, four are currently endangered. Two are classified as vulnerable or threatened-the Grizzly (also known as the Brown) bear and the Polar bear. Only one has healthy populations, the

Continued on next page



The bare facts about bear populations indicate they are heading for trouble in both Canada and B.C.

It is estimated that Canada has between 20,000 and 25,000 Grizzly bears and about 400,000 Black bears. Last year, about 22,000 bears in total were legally killed. Factoring in the poaching at rates according to experts (Doggett, 1994; Slobodian, 1994), we are possibly losing 44,000 to 66,000 bears annually which is more than 15 percent of the total estimated population of bears in Canada.

Lacking an accurate census, estimates of B.C.'s bear population are wildly divergent. Grizzly bear population estimates range from 4,000 to 13,000 (bear biologist Wayne McCrory estimates 4,000 to 6,000; B.C. government 10,000 to 13,000; and hunting organizations 13,000).

For Black bears the estimates range from 65,000 to 160,000 (Canadian Wildlife Federation estimates 62,800 to 112,000 (1992); B.C. government 120,000 plus or minus 25 percent; hunters 160,000).

Annual legal kills in B.C. are about 400 Grizzlies and 5,000 Blacks (including "nuisance bear" kills). After factoring in kills by poachers, we could be losing well in excess of 10 percent of both species province-wide. Given the B.C. Ministry of Environment's own stated policy that no more than four percent of Grizzlies and eight percent of Blacks are to be annually "harvested" from all sources, this is not sustainable and is leading to declining populations averaged over the province.

In terms of enforcement, B.C. has only about 150 wildlife conservation officers each patrolling some 5,000 square kilometres. According to their own admission, more than 2,500 conservation officers are needed to constitute an effective anti-poaching field force.



Grizzly Bear in the now protected Khutzeymateen wilderness. Photo: Rick O'Neill.

Poll shows people support ban on trophy hunting of Black Bears

In 1995, an Angus Reid poll commis-

Continued from page 1

North American Black bear, but this could rapidly change.

The endangered bear species include the Spectacled bear of South America, the Sun bear and Sloth bear of India and Southeast Asia, and the previously wide-ranging Asiatic Black bear, whose demise is most significant, since it used to be the main source of bear parts to feed the Asian market. As of the late 1980s, Asiatic Black bear numbers in East Asia (China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan) dwindled to the point of commercial extinction. This has forced poaching to spread northward, targeting the Russian Brown bear, and eastward for the Grizzly and especially the North American Black bears.

Definite proof of this expanded demand rests in the fact that China has been applying for permits to import Black bears from Canada to fill the cages in their notorious "bear farms" (where permanent catheters continually extract bear bile), and South Korea has been importing North American Black bears for slaughter in front of restaurant customers!

BET'R animal parts have unbelievably high cash value today. While a live wild tiger is priceless, a dead tiger is worth \$75,000 US in saleable parts; rhino horn can fetch up to \$60,000 per kilogram; bear galls have been known to sell for \$64,000 a piece; and Koreans and Taiwanese pay up to \$2,000 per bowl of bear paw soup. The incentive to poach and traffic is immense.

But the killing of these animals for use in medicinal products is not necessary. Most products have absolutely no scientific basis to their effectiveness (the exception being Urso-deoxycholic acid [UDCA] found in bear galls) which now is being synthesized in large quantities. The 150 tonnes of UDCA synthesized a year in western medical laboratories are more than is found in all the living bears in the world!

I feel deep inside that hunting for pleasure or entertainment (recreational hunting) or for vanity (trophy hunting) or for profit (poaching) are all equally morally wrong. As far as I can see, gall, paw, head and hide are all bear parts and killing a bear for any of these reasons is unacceptable human behaviour. It is especially abominable for adults to teach children to kill wild animals for fun or sport.

The bear is to Canada as the tiger is to India and the lion to Kenya But while India and Kenya base or leave the

In 1995, an Angus Reid poll commissioned by the conservation group Base Watch indicated that 78 percent of those polled said they would support a ban on trophy hunting of Black bears in B.C.

The logical next step is to put the question to an official province-wide referendum, which is exactly what Paul George, founding Director of Western Canada Wilderness Committee is doing with his Ban Bear Hunting Initiative under B.C.'s Recall and Initiative Act. This is the chance for the silent majority who care about bears to have their voices heard.



Head and paws-grizzly bear hunt trophies. Photo: Valhalla Wilderness Society files.

The bear is to Canada as the tiger is to India and the lion to Kenya. But while India and Kenya have outlawed tiger and lion hunting respectively, Canada is still quagmired in the "great white hunter" tradition and continues to allow sport and trophy hunting of bears, the country's most magnificent and powerful of wild animals.

Canada, with its glorious history of leading the fight to save the whales, is now straggling behind two Third World countries in the global movement to phase out big game sport and trophy hunting.

The loss of biodiversity is a growing global crisis; increasing numbers of species are at risk of extinction. As the first "developed" country to ratify the international Biodiversity Convention (in 1992), Canada has the moral obligation to fully protect its species and to lead the world in biodiversity conservation. This means stopping the sport and trophy hunting of bears now, while they still have a chance to thrive.

Hunters pose with trophy black bears. Photo: Animal Alliance of Canada files.

Bear Referendum Road Tour '96

"Anthony Marr is on almost every hunter's hit list for trying to get trophy hunting of Black and Grizzly bears banned in B.C...." — Vancouver Sun, August 2, 1996, page B4.

"They are organized and hostile (the hunting lobby), and when they show up, it's ten to one - hunters to environmentalists..."—Georgia Straight, August 1-8, 1996, page 7.

"It was barely civil and sometimes downright ugly....
Anthony Marr was interrupted, shouted down and
generally abused by hunters in an audience of more
than 100 that spilled out of a conference room..."
—Prince George Citizen, July 5, 1996, page A1.

"With calm and respect, Anthony Marr faced rapid fire questioning from hunters..." --Kamloops Daily News, July 9, 1996, page A3.

These are just a few of the many highlights in the more than 100 newspaper articles generated during the eight-week-long province-wide road tour by Anthony Marr this summer. The purpose: to educate people about endangered animals especially the BET'R species (Bear, Elephant, Tiger and Rhino) as well as explain the Initiative to prohibit the sport and trophy hunting of bears in British Columbia to prevent B.C.'s bears from

becoming endangered and imperiled with extinction.

Despite the many stormy meetings, Marr returned to Vancouver in good spirits. One big reason was the great care and support provided by environmentalists along his 12,000 kilometre journey. Marr never had to camp out alone or stay at motels even once. Many of those who billeted him and attended his presentations generously donated funds, food and even long-distance phone calls to the project, as well as took him on hiking, kayaking, 4-wheeling, bear-watching and even horseback riding expeditions.

Marr wholeheartedly thanks everyone involved for making this tour a fruitful and enjoyable one and invites everyone he contacted and their friends to actively participate in Initiative 196001 to bring about an end to the sport and trophy hunting of bears in B.C. and greatly increase the penalties for poaching and trafficking.

He also thanks Bonita Charette and Lisa Moffatt, bear referendum campaigners, and the staff at WCWC for their very capable assistance in making this road tour a success. By the end of August, nearly 1,000 volunteer canvassers had applied to collect signatures on the Bear Protection Act petition.



















The following debate between Anthony Marr, WCWC's BET'R Campaigner, and a typical B.C. bear hunter is a composite drawn from actual meetings and radio talk shows in communities across B.C. during Marr's road tour.

	TBH - Typical Bear Hunter AM - Anth	ony Mar	r, WCWC's BET'R campaigner
твн:	"Your campaign is based only on emotion. There is no biological basis or reasons behind your demand that bear hunting ends."		target both hunters and poachers as well as traffickers and habitat destroyers to ensure that bears will survive over the long term."
AM:	"Although we believe that the killing of bears for pleasure (recreational hunting) and for vanity (trophy hunting) is morally indefensible, we also have biological reasons for wanting to end the sport hunting of bears in B.C. Grizzly bear populations are declining and the species is now listed as "threatened". Although Black bears are not yet considered 'at risk', population estimates are extremely variable and poaching is increasing. Four out of seven of Earth's bear species are	TBH: AM:	"You should go after the Asians and their use of bear parts, not us hunters." "Check out the media coverage of our BET'R Campaign over the last year. We have confronted the Asian community's use of bear parts long before the inception of the Ban Bear Hunting Referendum Initiative, and will continue to do so after the Referendum Initiative ends."
	already endangered. We must start to protect our bears before they, too, are in such dire straights as, say, the Asiatic Black bear."	твн:	"Hunting is not killing; it goes way beyond that. It's a form of communing with nature. I can't expect you to understand."
TBH: AM:	"You are challenging our right to hunt. This is wrong in principle." "I am concerned about the bears' right to survival. I am focusing on all threats, including habitat loss. I am also challenging the long-standing Oriental tradition and 'right' to use animal parts for medicine, an effort that hunters support."	AM:	"Hunting is not killing? Some humans may buy that argument, but not the bears. It's not necessary to kill in order to appreciate and enjoy nature."
		твн:	"Hunters are the anti-poaching field force. We are the eyes and ears for the conservation officers."
TBH: AM: TBH: AM:	"You are lumping us law-abiding hunters in with lawless poachers." "Do you indulge in bait hunting? (Editors note: putting out food so that those animals attracted to it can be shot at point blank range.)" "Of course not. It is illegal, and not right." "Baiting is legal in Washington state. Does that make it right there? The issue	AM:	"Relying on hunters to watch out for poachers is like letting coyotes safeguard sheep from wolves. We need to add more conservation officers, but there are also other hunters, hunting deer and moose for example, who can keep a watch. Further, without bear hunters, poachers will be much easier to spot, since anyone seen killing a bear or possessing bear parts would be a poacher."
	is not one of simply law, which changes with the thinking of society, but what is right given the current precarious state of wildlife on this planet."	твн:	"Bear hunting is the only hunting with a spring season. Without us bear hunters, there'll be no one out there watching out for poachers during this season when
TBH: AM:	"Hunters are the only true and effective conservationists." "According to whom?"	AM:	the bears are coming out of hibernation and are so vulnerable." "Yes, there will be-hikers, campers, mushroom pickers. They now easily outnumber bear hunters a thousand to one. Also the spring bear hunt is so
TBH:	"Former U.S. President Teddy Roosevelt, for one." "Theodore Roosevelt predated the environmental movement by nearly half a		ecologically unsound that 42 of the 48 lower U.S.A. states have banned it."
	century and lived at a time when wilderness dominated the planet. People now dominate the planet and many species have been driven to extinction. Today, conservationists fight to protect wildlife for its own sake, not for theirs."	твн:	"WCWC pulls numbers out of a hat. (Morning Sun - July 31) They're playing with figures fast and loose." (Times-Colonist - June 20) "All WCWC figures are quoted from published writings of internationally recognized bear research authorities, with references given, whereas hunters tend
		AM:	
твн:	"Hunters go after older, breeding-age animals. It's a good way to control population." (Terrace Standard - July 10)		to quote the highest population estimates available, and the lowest poaching estimates made by some B.C. government employees."
AM:	"Unlike other predators, who go after the weakest prey, thus genetically strengthening the prey species, hunters go after the most magnificent specimens, thus weakening the species."	TBH: AM:	"Banning bear hunting is WCWC's first step to banning all hunting." "We have made many public statements to the contrary. In WCWC's 16 years of conservation work, it has always supported subsistence and food hunting as
TBH:	"If you get rid of hunting, there'll be a bear population explosion."		well as aboriginal hunting and trapping rights."
	"Natural biological controls, such as food shortages, lower birth rate and intra- species competition and predation will keep the population level steady."	TBH:	"Many interior and northern towns economically depend on hunting." "Bear hunting is only a small percentage of the total hunting activity.
TRH-	"Why target legal hunters when poschers are the culturit?"		Additionally there is for exacts entential for exacts to be at intential

Additionally, there is far greater potential for generating local jobs and revenues

through eco-tourism than through the sport hunting of bears."

TBH:

"Why target legal hunters when poachers are the culprit?"

"As far as the bears are concerned, hunters and poachers are all bear-killers. We

Credits

Published by Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WCWC), 20 Water Street, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6B 1A4. Tel: (604) 683-8220 Fax: (604) 683-8229 E-Mail: wc2wild@wcb.nct Home Page http://www.web.net/wcwild/welcome.html

WCWC is a non-profit charitable society dedicated to promoting, through research and education, wilderness and wildlife protection and preservation.

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Bears need more protected wilderness sanctuaries for their long-term survival

Besides respite from hunters, bears require key wilderness sanctuaries—large roadless wilderness areas—for their long-term survival. Grizzlies are especially vulnerable to industrial activity—primarily logging and mining. Wherever human activities, including roads, predominate, the Grizzlies are driven out forever.

British Columbia fortunately still has enough wilderness left to sustain the bears. But we must preserve as parks and wildlife reserves more key big wilderness areas...and they are all currently threatened by industrial exploitation! It will be necessary to exceed the artificial upper limit of 12 percent of the province's land base that the current provincial government has set for our protected area system. Twelve percent of the land is not enough to sustain big mammals like our bears.

Here are a few of the key B.C. wilderness areas needing protection:

· the 5 million hectare Northern Rockies.

- the 180,000 hectare Taku watershed located near Atlin in northwest B.C.
- the 250,000 hectare region around Princess Royal Island, home of the rare spirit bear (a white phase of Black bear found only in B.C.).
- the last large wild watersheds on B.C.'s mid-coast, stronghold of the coastal Grizzly.
- the 260,000 hectare Stoltmann Wilderness, the largest unprotected wilderness area and prime Grizzly habitat close to Vancouver.
- Additions to the Granby Wilderness and the White Grizzly Wilderness, newly created parks in the Kootenays that must be expanded to make them viable bear sanctuaries.

WCWC continues to fight for the preservation of these wilderness areas while it fights to end sport and trophy hunting of bears.



Baby black bear cub. Photo: Andrea Maenza.

Please return to Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WCWC), 20 Water Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 1A4.

This page is authorized and paid for by Paul George, Proponent and Financial Agent of the Act to Prohibit the Hunting of Bears Initiative

AN INITIATIVE TO HOLD A CITIZEN REFERENDUM (PROVINCE-WIDE VOTE) TO ENACT LEGISLATION TO BAN TROPHY/SPORT HUNTING OF B.C. BEARS

If current habitat loss, hunting and poaching pressures continue, British Columbia's bears will be threatened with extinction the same way as the elephant, tiger, and rhino are!

WHAT IS AN INITIATIVE?

With the proclamation of B.C.'s Recall and Initiative Act in 1995, B.C. became the first (and still is the only) province in Canada where citizens can directly initiate legislation. The proposal of an Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in B.C. is the first serious attempt to use this new democratic tool.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

A proponent, in this case WCWC Founding Director Paul George, (by law it must be a person, not an organization) sends a copy of the proposed law to B.C.'s Chief Electoral Officer, along with a \$50 fee. Paul George submitted his proposal in June, 1996 and received approval in principle to proceed with the Initiative from B.C.'s Chief Electoral Officer on July 11 when a summary of the proposed Act was printed in the B.C. Gazette.

September 9 to December 9, 1996 was set as the 90 day period to collect the signatures of the registered voters who support the Initiative. There are 75 different Initiative petitions-one for each riding in the province. Witnesses approved of by the Chief Electoral Officer and the Proponent must gather the signatures of a minimum of 10 percent of registered voters in each electoral district-approximately 210,000 signatures province-wide and the proponent must submit them to the Chief Electoral Officer by the end of the business day on Monday December 9. If the proponent is successful in the signature-gathering, the government can table the legislation in the legislature or put it to referendum (a special province-wide citizen vote) pre-scheduled for the last Saturday in September, 1999!

HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE AND HELP PROTECT BEARS!

We need as many canvassers as possible in every one of B.C.'s 75 electoral districts to collect signatures on this Bear Protection Act petition (we estimate about 3,000 canvassers province-wide). To qualify as a canvasser you must be a registered B.C. voter and have resided in B.C. for the past 6 months. You must fill out and sign the special form that the government has given the Proponent, Paul George, saying that you want to be an official canvasser who will collect and witness signatures.

Care about the bears. Help advance participatory democracy! Collect signatures on the Initiative petition 196001! Call 687-CARE or toll-free 1-800-661-WILD to have the canvasser application form sent to you or to find out where you can sign the petition.

A Special Message from Paul George, Proponent, Initiative 196001

I believe that it is critical to conserve a wildlife species before it becomes endangered. Once a species is declared endangered, the 'price on its head' skyrockets, accelerating poaching and hastening its slide into extinction. The purpose of the referendum is to protect the bears now and prevent the Grizzly bear (currently 'threatened') and the Black bear from ever becoming 'endangered' or extinct.

An Act to prohibit the hunting of bears'

* Drafted by Sierra Legal Defense Fund for Paul George, Initiative Proponent

Whereas the population, range and habitat of Grizzly Bears in British Columbia has diminished dramatically since European settlement due to increasing human demand for land and resources, the erosion of wilderness, and increased hunting and poaching;

and Whereas Black Bears are also threatened by the same human pressures as well as the recent decimation of the Asiatic Black Bear in East Asia;

and Whereas the burgeoning international trade in bear parts is exposing bears to increasing levels 130. A person who sells, traffics or possesses for the purpose of selling or trafficking bears, of poaching and hunting:

and Whereas British Columbia recognizes and supports the United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Biological Diversity:

- 128. A person who kills, injures, captures or otherwise harms a bear that threatens imminent harm to a person or persons does not thereby commit an offence.
- 129. A person who kills, injures, captures or otherwise harms a bear in the course of carrying out scientific research pursuant to a valid permit issued under this Act does not thereby commit an
- including any parts or derivative products thereof, commits an offence.

Conservation of Biological Diversity: and Whereas the hunting and killing of bears for sport constitutes an unnecessary and serious Offenses and Penalties threat to the survival of bears, and Whereas the hunting and killing of bears for sport is unacceptable to many British 131. (1) Where a person is convicted of an offence under section 126 or 130 of this Act, the person Columbians: (a) for a first offence to a fine of not more than \$250,000 and not less than \$25,000 and a and Whereas bears are a powerful symbol of British Columbia's magnificent wilderness: term of imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both; and and Whereas British Columbians seek to maintain in perpetuity the diversity and healthy (b) for a second or subsequent offence, to a fine of not more than \$500,000 and not less populations of bears in British Columbia; than \$50,000 and a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year and not less than THEREFORE HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly two months, or both. of the Province of British Columbia, enacts as follows: 132. For the purposes of the Sections 125 through 131: The Wildlife Act, S.B.C. 1982, c. 57 is amended by adding the following sections: "bear" includes a Grizzly Bear (Ursus arctos horribilis), a Black Bear (Ursus americanus) 125. The hunting of bears in British Columbia is prohibited, notwithstanding any other provision and all sub-species or colour variations of those species in this Act. "hunt" includes shooting at, attracting, baiting, searching for, chasing, pursuing, following after or 126. A person who hunts a bear, except as provided in sections 81, 127, 128, and 129 of this Act, on the trail of, stalking or lying in wait for a bear, or attempting to do any of those things. commits an offence. whether or not a bear is then or subsequently wounded, killed or captured, when the person's intention is to harm, kill or capture a bear 127. No provision of this Act abrogates or derogates from the aboriginal or treaty rights of a First Nation or applies to any aboriginal person hunting for cultural or sustenance purposes. "traffic" means to buy, trade, transport or distribute for gain or consideration, or to offer to do so. STOP BEAR KILLING
FOR BEST HURSTED PRINTS 196001 BEARS CARE... This Grizzly in mid-coast of B.C. needs full protection now. Photo: lan McAllister Yes! I support your Initiative to Ban Bear Hunting Here is my non-tax-deductible donation of \$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 other Bumper Stickers: Please say NO to Bear Hunting STOP BEAR Killing FOR FUN AND PROFIT BEARS CARE...Do You? I would like to order ___ stickers (\$5 each includes all taxes and postage. Set of 3 for \$10.) Enclosed is dollars. I am a registered B.C. voter. I want to be a volunteer canvasser. Please send me all the information necessary right away! I realize that

all signatures must be gathered from September 9 to the beginning of December, 1996.

Province Postal Code Phone

Address

Please make your cheque out to Ban Bear Hunting Initiative. Send to Paul George, 20 Water St., Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1A4.

Name (please print)

City