

The Myth of Trophy Hunting as Conservation



"It goes without saying that importing trophies of endangered species should be banned by the British Government. I'm really shocked that they haven't already done it. The whole world should do it."
Johnny Rodrigues, Zimbabwean Conservation Task Force

A League Against Cruel Sports submission to
Environment Minister, Elliott Morley MP

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Trophy hunting is a booming business across Africa and it is not hard to understand why: hunters are willing to pay more than £50,000 to shoot a rare animal. Such easy money is irresistible, especially in the poor countries where most of the world's endangered species live. There are no international laws against shooting critically endangered wildlife. It is up to individual governments to introduce such legislation, if they so wish.

While it may not be possible in the short term to prevent hunters travelling around the globe to kill endangered animals, it is possible to deny them the perverse pleasure of bringing back a stuffed, mounted trophy of their kill.

Earlier this year, the European Union banned the import of trophies from British Columbian grizzly bears amidst fears for the survival of the species. The grizzly is listed in Appendix I (the most critically endangered) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The League Against Cruel Sports is campaigning for this protection to be extended to all Appendix I animals, including rhinos, leopards and cheetahs.



EXPOSING THE HUNTERS' LIES

Hunters claim they are "conservationists", arguing that the only way that wildlife can survive is if it is given an economic value. There is no disputing that trophy hunting is a lucrative business. The question is could it really be more valuable than eco-tourism? And, even more importantly, does it earn income for the millions of poor people who will otherwise regard wild animals as nothing but a nuisance?

Hunting versus eco-tourism

A November 2004 study by the University of Port Elizabeth estimated that eco-tourism on private game reserves generated "**more than 15 times the income of livestock or game rearing or overseas hunting**". (1) Eco-tourism lodges in Eastern Cape Province produce almost 2000 rand (£180) per hectare. Researchers also noted that more jobs were created and staff received "extensive skills training". (2)

The reasons for this are obvious. Although hunters pay large sums, ordinary tourists are much more numerous. Hunters shoot an animal once, but photographic tourists can shoot it a thousand times and the animal is still there. In 1982, it was estimated that a maned male lion earned Kenya National Parks \$50,000 (£26,500) a year through photographic tourism.(3) In comparison, in neighbouring Tanzania, hunters currently pay a \$2000 (£1060) trophy fee and the lion is gone forever.(4)

Hunting safaris are seasonal and are open for a maximum of six months a year. They use very basic camps and staff rarely learn any other skills to support themselves during the rest of the year. In contrast, photographic safaris run all year. They use well-established, often luxurious, camps or hotels. Staff are trained in management and other useful professional qualifications which advance their careers.

According to Blythe Loutit, founder of Save the Rhino Trust Fund in Namibia, "Tourism is far better than hunting from the employment angle. Whereas hunting is quick income for one or two trackers and

a skinner, three to five people in one family can earn a permanent income in tourism. There is also the probability of improved income as years go by." (5)

Even pro-hunters admit that economic and employment opportunities with hunting outfits are limited.

During an undercover League Against Cruel Sports investigation in spring 2004, [Sir Edward Dashwood](#), director of the E J Churchill Sporting Agency, admitted to investigators that **"90% of the trophy fee goes straight into some Nigerian's pocket or African politician or whatever it is."** (6)

Michael De Alessi, director of the Centre for Private Conservation in Zimbabwe, commented in an essay promoting hunting: "Photo safaris and other non-consumptive activities can be quite lucrative but take a great deal of time and investment to set up. Guests expect comfortable accommodations, quality meals and a range of activities. This in turn means a fair number of staff. Hunters, on the other hand, are often more happy with Spartan amenities, and one or two game scouts." (7)

In Botswana's Okavango Delta, a prime game area, the largest photographic operator is Okavango Wilderness Safaris (OWS). Each of their twelve lodges have an average of 30 staff, compared to 10 to 12 for hunting camps. Former OWS managing director Alan Wolfromm has observed: "When one considers the employment statistics and training offered with career opportunities, there is no doubt that photographic safaris have a far larger beneficial impact on the general economy." (8)

Africa Geographic drew up the following hypothetical comparison between two average sized concessions in the Okavango Delta, one selling hunting safaris and the other selling photographic safaris. This showed that photographic safaris generate more than three times the total revenue than hunting safaris and pay more than 12 times as much in staff salaries.(9)

| HUNTING SAFARI | PHOTOGRAPHIC SAFARI |
|--|---|
| Length of season - 6 months | Length of season - all year |
| Number of guests per season - 30 | Number of guests per season - 2,630 |
| Number of bed nights per season - 420 (30 guests at an average stay of 14 nights) | Number of bed nights per season - 6,840 (50% occupancy of 38 beds at an average stay of 2-3 nights) |
| Average revenue generated - \$44,800 per safari | Average revenue generated - \$224 per bed night |
| Total revenue generated per season - \$448,000 | Total revenue generated per year - \$1.55 million |
| Revenue generated by Air Botswana - \$7,200 (30 standard returns to Johannesburg) | Revenue generated by Air Botswana - \$631,000 (2,630 standard returns to Johannesburg) |
| Gratuities and curios - \$9,600 (30 x \$320) | Gratuities and curios - \$420,800 (2,630 x \$160) |
| Employment - 2,952 days per year (12 people for 6 months and 2 people for 12 months) | Employment - 27,360 days per year (76 people for 12 months) |
| Staff wages - \$14,170 per year (non-management averaging \$4.80 a day) | Staff wages - \$174,400 per year (non-management averaging \$6.40 a day) |

The 'pale male' elite

Africa's hunting industry primarily benefits wealthy landowners, who are, almost exclusively, white. [Gareth Patterson](#), known as 'the Lion Man of Africa' (10), refers to these beneficiaries as "the pale males".(11)

Patterson has told the League: "Hunting pays the hunting industry and handsomely so."

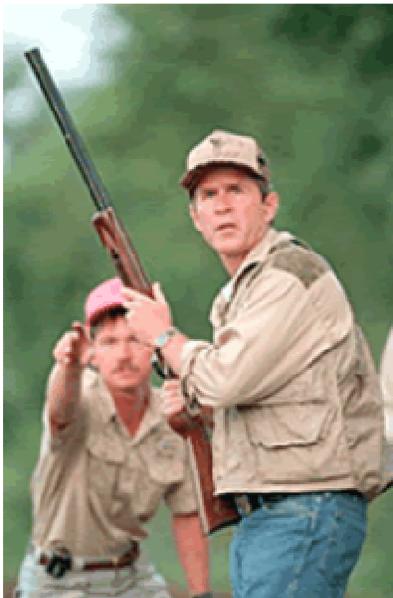


This assessment is not disputed by the South African Government. South Africa's Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, stated in a November 2004 press release: "Professional hunting remains by-and-large white and male-dominated - visibly separate from most South African communities." He has urged hunters to "rapidly and genuinely incorporate all communities as owners, managers, service providers and as customers", suggesting there are "many opportunities for Black Economic Empowerment partnerships with communities". (12)

The most powerful friends on earth

With their financial and political might, this formidably powerful clique of hunters is shamelessly promoting hunting as a form of conservation. Many poor governments are easily won over because it offers such easy money - the bulk of which goes straight into their pockets.

According to Israeli journalist Zvi Bar'el, "In Tanzania, a hunting safari can bring in \$50,000 or even \$100,000. The large sums are mostly collected by the Government, which issues the hunting licenses. Officially, only a small portion of this is transferred to the [local] citizenry. Other sums, also quite considerable, are given to citizens in the hunting regions in return for their agreement to turn a blind eye to deviations from the conditions of the hunting license." (13)



The hunters have powerful international allies. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has long poured money into the hunting lobby, and this increased under George W. Bush, who is a lifetime member of Safari Club International (SCI), the world's largest hunting lobby. For example, SCI bought computers for the nature conservation component in South Africa's Limpopo Province, where the majority of hunting takes place. (14)

According to Michele Pickover, chairperson of Xwe African Wild Life Investigation & Research Centre in South Africa,: "To date most, if not all, Community Based Natural Resource Management projects have been funded via donor funding." (15)

The most famous example is Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE programme, which was promoted as a model for employing local communities in trophy hunting. However, as the Species Survival Network (SSN) has pointed out: "projects like the much touted CAMPFIRE program have proven unsustainable in the long term without substantial and continuous infusions of outside aid." (16)

CAMPFIRE only survived because it was given massive subsidies by the US Government through USAID, starting with \$8 million from 1989 to 1996 and rising to \$20.5 million in 1997 to 2000. With only \$2.5 million a year in programme revenue, the trophy hunting project was making a massive loss and was not a financially viable business venture. (17)

Incestuous relationship

In South Africa, the source of 85% of Africa's trophies, (18) the Government is actively promoting the development of game ranches to feed the rapacious demands of trophy hunters.

According to Pickover, "A small, but vociferous, pro-gun and pro-hunting lobby, largely made up of white Afrikaans-speaking males is bank rolling the trophy hunting industry. Seemingly entrenched Government bureaucrats who were appointed during the Apartheid era and who are also mostly white, Afrikaans-speaking men and who on the whole support hunting, in turn, prop them up.

"In this way, unacceptable practices are being enabled by the very official agencies that should be playing an independent monitoring and even watchdog role.". (19)

This view is supported by Chris Mercer, a retired advocate and co-author of 'For the Love of Wildlife', who now runs the Kalahari Raptor Centre, a wildlife sanctuary in South Africa. (20) According to Mercer, "The hunting industry and provincial conservation officials are often one and the same." Mercer, who has been at the forefront of efforts to outlaw canned hunting, has compared this to "asking Al Capone's henchmen to monitor his activities". (21)

Colonialism reborn

The colour issue cannot be ignored. As most of the profits are retained by the landowners, hunting companies, their international agents and taxidermists, this so-called 'sport' heightens the concentration of wealth in the hands of the well-positioned few instead of the needy many. To take one example, on a 21 day leopard hunting safari in Tanzania costing almost \$43,000, 58.6% went directly to the hunting outfitter. Less than 5% went to the government for wildlife conservation and the remainder was spent on airfares, charter flights, packing and shipping trophies and a "general Government fund". No mention was even made of funds going to local communities. (22)

Such a polarisation of wealth is simply a recipe for greater instability in what is already the world's most troubled continent.

Many African communities are traditionally hunters. Under colonialism, hunting for subsistence was seen as uncivilised while hunting by imperialists was a civilised form of entertainment.(23) African communities were

banned from hunting, while Europeans, such as the author Ernest Hemingway, came to Africa to shoot animals for fun. Today's trophy hunting uses the same double standards.

There is, however, nothing civilised about letting an injured animal bleed to death (rather than shooting it in the head) because you want an unspoilt trophy to hang on your wall. Amateur hunters generally do not have good track records for clean kills. UK research indicates that amateurs are less



capable than professionals of killing their targets outright and therefore cause unnecessary suffering to the animal concerned. (24)



Loutit of Save The Rhino Trust in Namibia has summed the problem up: "A question I am often asked -- and I have no answer -- is why can the 'great white' hunters be allowed to have the rhino horn trophy, but not the traditional medicine makers and the traditional dagger handle carvers?" (25)

The double standards are incomprehensible. Allowing rich white men to shoot animals for fun, while poor blacks are not allowed to kill and animal out of need, is a blatant injustice. Even more so, as thousands of Africans were forced off their traditional lands to make space for wildlife. (26)

Not surprisingly, this hypocrisy has ultimately worsened the situation for wildlife, leading inevitably to increased poaching. Born Free spokesperson Ian Redmond summed it up succinctly: "If the law seems unjust it is much harder to enforce." (27) It also sends the message that dead animals are still a valuable trade commodity.

Recipe for conflict

The South African Government rejects these concerns, arguing that it needs the money. It has already accepted the introduction of hunting in state parks such as Pilanesberg and Madikwe, and there are increasing fears it will soon be legalised in national parks as well. (28)

Fiona Mcleod, a journalist with South Africa's Mail & Guardian who has written extensively on wildlife, shared her concern: "I would not be surprised if we soon see a motion to introduce hunting in national parks. Everybody is convinced by the money motive, and the lobby that is promoting this is getting stronger and stronger." (29)

This move would be detrimental to the eco-tourism industry which is already complaining that hunting upsets the animals so much they cannot be viewed. Nor do eco-tourist operators relish the prospect of a photographic tourist accidentally witnessing an animal being hunted and shot. (30)

It is virtually impossible for these two groups to co-exist. The hunting industry, and the Governments they have wooed, are battling against eco-tourism operators and local communities for control over the planet's endangered species - and often winning.

In Tanzania, where 20% of the country has been leased out to anyone who can afford it, local communities accuse hunting companies and their clients of indiscriminate hunting of wildlife, insensitivity to the rights of the local people and to the overall wellbeing of the environment. (31) Because of the sums involved, the hunters are predominantly foreigners, reinforcing the sense of colonial double standards.

Across the border in Kenya, the Government introduced limited game cropping under pressure from wealthy landowners who argued that this would give them an economic interest in conserving wildlife on their land. This incensed local communities, who were still not allowed to hunt, and has caused "heightened animosity between the landowners and the communities" as well as increased poaching. (32) Recently, landowners began pushing for a Bill lifting Kenya's 1977 ban on sports hunting. (33)

A smokescreen for corruption and poaching

Hunters prize rare trophies. To get them, many pay bribes to exceed the hunting quota, shoot the wrong species, age or gender, to use illegal methods or to hunt without a permit. (34) Trophy hunting depends on effective state regulation and extensive scientific monitoring of animal populations. Neither is feasible in Africa, perceived to be the world's least developed and most corrupt continent.

Opening up even a limited legal trade creates a smokescreen for poachers which is almost impossible to police. Prior to 1986, when the whaling moratorium was introduced, legal quotas were widely used as cover for poaching, driving some species near to extinction. The same is happening with trophy hunting of endangered species. (35)

Even in the US and Canada, among the world's best regulated countries, flagrant poaching continues behind legal hunting. In Maine, Alaska and Alberta, veteran guides have been caught running poaching rings while simultaneously catering to trophy hunters. (36)

Traffic, the pro-hunting wildlife trade monitoring network, investigated hunting in Europe and Asia. It found that illegal hunting grew in parallel with the legal market and in a 2002 report admitted: "Trophy hunting can in some cases - rather than providing economic benefits for conservation - have also a detrimental effect for nature conservation.

"International trade monitoring and stakeholder co-operation remains to be crucial to safeguard the future of rare species. Enforcement work should involve effective co-operation between management authorities, Interpol, national police authorities and interested co-operators from the hunting society itself." (37)



Monitoring is phenomenally costly. For example, pro-hunting biologist Mitchell Taylor admitted that maintaining a good enough track of the grizzly bear population in Canada in order to sustain trophy hunting would require a 10 year investment in research costing C\$20 million (£9 million). As the Canadian Government could not afford this, Taylor was forced to admit that it was "difficult to defend hunting practices". (38)

The killing fields of Loliondo

Tanzania clearly illustrates the pitfalls of introducing hunting to a poor country that is susceptible to corruption. For example, the United Arab Emirate's deputy defence minister Brigadier Mohamed Abdulrahim al Ali, through his company Ortello Business Company (OBC), bought the rights to hunt on Loliondo, traditional territory of the Maasai next to Serengeti National Park. His visitors include Arab royalty. The land is supposed to be managed by area residents for their benefit. OBC, like many tourism companies in developing countries, makes donations to schools and development projects and provides some jobs. But locals are far from happy.

Various investigations have found OBC breaking all the rules - hunting with lights at night, luring animals with artificial salt licks and shooting from vehicles. (39) The royal entourage includes a helicopter used to herd animals towards the shooters. There is widespread fear among the local Maasai, who complain of intimidation, arbitrary arrest and detention by OBC officials, members of the UAE army and the Tanzanian paramilitary who patrol the property. (40)



While Tanzania has strict rules on game hunting, Maasai who have worked at the lodge report that guests are never told the limits and hunt as much as they want. (41) Hunters bribe park rangers and guides to let them enter protected areas or give them blank hunting certificates to shoot what they like. (42) They give cash to anyone who can lead them to big game, especially leopards. (43)

According to one Maasai leader: "All the resident animals have been killed... (now) they carry out hunting raids in the Serengeti National Park but the Government closes its eyes." (44)

One Danish hunter summarised the situation cynically: "Here in Tanzania we can kill what we want because money speaks." (45)

Annihilation of wildlife in Zimbabwe

Lawless Zimbabwe provides an even more terrifying example of what can happen without adequate regulation, according to conservationists. Here, poaching in connection with farm occupations is totally out of control.

Johnny Rodrigues, chairperson of the Zimbabwean Conservation Task Force has detailed the problem: "Nobody knows how many animals we have left since the onset of the land reform programme. I estimate we have lost between 90 and 100 per cent of game on game ranches, over 60 per cent in the conservancies and maybe 40 per cent in our national parks. The new settlers don't bother with quotas. As long as the hunter has money, he can kill to his heart's content.

"There is no law and order here. The rich are getting richer and the poor are starving to death. Our local communities are not getting anything. That is why poaching is so rife. You can't really blame the locals. They are hungry." (46)

According to Rodrigues, South African hunters are taking advantage of the chaos to run illegal safari hunting operations. Out of Africa Safaris are amongst the worst offenders. They bring American tourists to the shoot in Zimbabwe via their US agent Richard Putman in Seminole, Alabama. The outfit is based in All Days in South Africa, just over the border from Zimbabwe. (47)

Rodrigues explained: "They bring their clients in here, shoot to their heart's content and then smuggle the trophies across the border in false fuel tanks on their vehicles to their base in South Africa. They have a huge warehouse there where they cure the trophies and prepare them for export."

Out of Africa Safaris recently made a trip to Woodlands Estates which has been confiscated from its legal owner where, according to Rodrigues, "The resident war vet charged the hunters \$50,000 and told them they could kill as much game as they could carry. An eyewitness told me it was like a slaughterhouse. There were dead animals lying everywhere, buffalo, elephant, lion, leopard, kudu,

eland, you name it. He said there were impala hanging from the trees which they were using as bait to catch the leopards."

Three members of the outfit were caught at the border and arrested.



Zimbabwe plans to apply for the right to hunt its black rhino population, which is on CITES Appendix 1, at the next CITES meeting. It is hopeful of success following the approval given to Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa's applications at the last CITES meeting in October. (48)

Wally Herbst, chairman of the Wildlife Producers Association, has asked: "How are we as custodians supposed to support our CITES stance when we daily watch the poaching tally mount? How many pieces of paper with poaching stats must be produced before our ministry acts?" (49)

Infanticide, inbreeding and other knock on effects

Aside from the difficulties of politics and implementation, many scientists firmly oppose trophy hunting because we simply do not know enough about the potential impact on animal societies. No baseline studies have been done on the ecology of a hunted area. (50) With these huge gaps in our understanding, conservationists argue it is best to adopt the precautionary principle because what is lost can never be regained. (51)

The available evidence is worrying. Experts agree that for every one adult male lion that is shot, up to 12 cubs can die. (52) This is because another dominant male takes over from the dead lion and kills all his cubs. This plays havoc with the pride's social structure, promoting infighting and increasing tension among members. (53) Cub infanticide has been well-documented with lions. (54) It is also known to occur with bears (55), leopards (56), and other animals.



Trophy hunting also has serious genetic implications. Hunters target males in their prime with the largest manes or biggest horns, the animals who protect the rest of the pride from predators. The impact of this can be seen in heavily hunted areas, such as Tanzania, where the size of trophy tusks or manes rapidly decreases, much to the annoyance of hunters. (57)

According to Pickover of Xwe, "Hunters are killing the strong and healthy animals and this goes completely against the balance of nature. Some ecologists refer to hunting as evolution in reverse." (58)

This view is supported by the Oxford University Wildlife Conservation Unit (Wildcru), which has carried out research in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park, concluding that over-hunting goes against natural selection, disrupts social behaviour and creates unhealthy age and sex ratios.

Wildcru has warned about the genetic risks of hunting: "In a natural situation mature male lions compete for groups of females, the fittest males dominate, passing on their genes. If excessive cropping of mature males occurs, young less experienced males or males that do not normally have access to females may be able to take over prides. Without the effect of natural selection a situation where sub-optimal genes are incorporated into the population might occur." (59)

Dereck Joubert, world-renowned wildlife filmmaker and author, has already witnessed this in Botswana. He has documented cases where young males have stayed within their natal pride and mated with both their mothers and sisters. This inbreeding is the result of hunting pressures which have prevented dominant males from establishing themselves. (60)



One of the more unusual repercussions of trophy hunting was recorded in South Africa's Pilanesberg National Park:

"Without being kept in discipline by prime bulls, young males tend to enter in musth [when they want to mate] prematurely and for up to five months, leading to infringements on female elephants and even rhinos... [B]etween 1992 and 1997, more than 40 white rhinoceros inhabiting the park were violated and killed by adolescent bull elephants". The problem was addressed by introducing six older males from another park. (61)

Working in the dark

Most Governments managing wildlife populations are not aware of such complexities. They struggle to even get basic figures for their wildlife populations. It is hard to count animals that roam freely in extensive areas which are difficult to survey. If wildlife managers cannot afford expensive aerial surveys, they have no choice but to rely on guesstimates provided by hunters, safari operators or local communities. Self-interested contributors falsify population figures so that they can continue to hunt 'excess' animals. (62) Interested parties, such as Safari Club International, sometimes fund research, which can prejudice findings. (63)

In a comprehensive summary of over 100 studies of the results of 'sustainable harvest' programmes for the German conservation organisation, Pro Wildlife, Martin Hutter observed that, given the costs involved, "it is not surprising, therefore, that monitoring is neglected in many harvesting schemes and projects based on wildlife utilisation." (64)

In his study, Hutter cited the example of Namibia, where the Government relaxed its regulations on quotas to involve "minimum and very basic biological information necessary to make decisions on sustainability of harvest, such as the following: expectation of the landowners (statement of management objectives), a record of additions and removals (including harvest) of game, an initial inventory of game resources, and an assessment of all habitat management (such as controlled burns, addition of water holes etc.) and actions to protect against poaching". (65)

This concern was echoed by 27 leading animal and environmental welfare organisations in a letter to the United States Government that successfully persuaded it to back down on an attempts to liberalise the import of endangered species into the US: "Study after study documents programs in which data on population declines are ignored, quotas go unenforced, illegal specimens are laundered through registered programs, and the promised benefits for local communities and conservation efforts never materialize" (66)

This is again reinforced by Wildcru, which has stated: "Setting hunting quotas is a difficult task, which must take into account many factors such as population size, longevity of the species, social biology and ecology. Without a reliable population estimate a reasonable quota can never be set." (67)

Factory farming wildlife

The Kenyan conservationist Richard Leakey predicted: "If wildlife and wilderness were regarded solely as items that generate money, their days were surely numbered. Inevitably, someone would find a way to use them to make more money from them than protecting them does." (68)

What Leakey did not foresee was the horror of canned hunting: the captive breeding of lions, cubs hand reared by humans whom they learn to trust (and associate with food) who are, when they reach the right age, placed in an enclosure, often drugged, to be shot by a foreign trophy hunter. Despite official condemnation, the practice is rife in South Africa and is spreading to other countries. (69)

Canned hunting is so clearly unethical that even Safari Club International, which represents 45 million hunters worldwide, has condemned the practice, saying that the element of "fair chase" in hunting does not apply to canned hunts. (70)



The breeders show no respect for their animals. In order to maximise profits, the cubs are almost immediately removed from their mothers to induce another oestrus cycle so she can be inseminated again. Lionesses have been known to chew on the wire mesh that separates them from their cubs until their gums bleed. As male lions are the most sought after trophies, most of the female cubs are killed. (71)

According to Ian Michler in a 2002 Africa Geographic article, breeders save money of food for cubs and young lions by feeding the a diet that "comprises mostly unborn foetuses that have been removed from cattle slaughtered at abattoirs while pregnant. In some instances food supplements are used. [In 2001], 23 adults and 51 cubs died at Mokwalo [a white lion breeding project in Limpopo Province] within a week of eating contaminated supplements". (72)

Unsurprisingly, many of the animals suffer from captivity depression. Inbreeding is common, although this violates both South Africa's obligations under the Biodiversity Convention and its own Biodiversity Act. To solve this, breeders eagerly seek out wild lions, which are sometimes sold by national parks, to improve the genetic mix. (73)

To meet hunters' desire for unusual trophies and breeders' desire to get rich, exotic cats such as panthers and Bengal tigers are sometimes bred. Sanwild, a South African wildlife rehabilitation centre, says genetics are also manipulated to produce animals with abnormal skin colours, such as red blue

wildebeest, yellow blesbok and black impala. One captive breeder is known to be trying to create a "liger" by cross breeding a tiger and a lion. (74)

Chris Mercer of the Kalahari Raptor Centre has denounced captive breeding programmes, saying: "Numbers alone are not a measure of conservation. Soon all our wildlife will be found in factory farms, bred like pigs in crates. If the only alternative to extinction is to be imprisoned for life in cruel and unnatural living conditions, before being executed by inhumane and unethical means, then the species would be better off dead." (75)

The canned hunting industry was exposed by The Cook Report on British television in 1997. Hidden cameras showed hunting promoters in South Africa explaining how they dig holes under the fence of Kruger National Park to lure out lions which they then dart with tranquilliser to help the hunters' aim.

The South African Government barely reacted to widespread international protest. When environment minister Pallo Jordan was shown a tape of The Cook Report, he dismissed it as a provincial matter. (76) In fact, a recent Government policy on the sustainable use of large predators gives breeders the right to extend their factory farming methods to other vulnerable indigenous and exotic animals on the CITES list including tigers, cheetahs and jaguars. (77)

South Africa's Wildlife Action Group has complained: "There are powerful forces at play in South Africa to protect the interest of lion breeders, as this has become a very lucrative and powerful industry." (78)

South Africa's mainstream tourism industry is pushing for the Government to ban captive breeding and canned hunting. They fear that the scandal of such animal cruelty will deter ordinary tourists from visiting their country.

Australian venture capitalist Philip Wollen of The Winsome Constance Kindness Trust has already warned South Africa about the threat. In an open letter to the South African public he stated: "This reputation does not happen overnight. It creeps up on you and suddenly one day you realise that your country smells of decaying flesh in the nostrils of the international community. By then it is too late." (79)

As a last resort, many South African animal welfare groups, including the Kalahari Raptor Centre and Ecoterra International (80), are willing to organise a tourist boycott to force their Government to shut down these inhumane factory farms.

There is a better way

As well as providing more jobs and encouraging democratic management of our natural assets, ecotourism teaches people to respect wildlife in its natural state. Animals are appreciated for their intrinsic beauty and value, instead of being treated as a commodity to be used in whichever barbaric way is most profitable.

The example of South Africa's Maluleke community provides a model of integrating indigenous people into conservation programmes. (81) Under apartheid, the Maluleke were thrown off their ancestral lands to create South Africa's premier game reserve, the Kruger National Park. Since the introduction of democracy to South Africa, they have been given 24,000 hectares of their land back.

The Maluleke's commercial advisers calculated that the community could make more money from tourism than from hunting. This fits well with the Maluleke's traditional respect for animals as a hunting community. So they signed a deal to lease out their ancestral lands as a contract park, which they jointly manage with representatives from Kruger. Lodges, guesthouses and a museum were built in

partnership with the private sector, which pays a monthly lease and levy fees into a community development fund.

Local people have been trained as wildlife managers and safari guides. Some have graduated with national diplomas in nature conservation and business management. Thus, the park has been successfully transformed from a source of resentment into a sustainable source of income. (82)

Kenya, the only country in Africa that bans sport hunting, promotes itself as Africa's leading ecotourism destination. The Ecotourism Society of Kenya has set up an eco-rating scheme for lodges and camps, the first of its kind in Africa. The focus is on delivering benefits to communities by "improving the quality of individual human lives through providing health care, education, and economic advancement, and on empowering local communities to manage their environment and resources effectively". (83)

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (LWC) (84), in the foothills of Mount Kenya, is one of the certified lodges. It is one of the biggest employers in the province, with 200 full-time staff, 50 to 100 part-time staff and an additional 150 people employed in tourism enterprises, furniture and carpet-making workshops and farms within Lewa's boundaries. It supports and builds primary schools, inviting children to visit the conservancy and learn about conservation, a clinic and local self-help groups.

LWC also supports the Namunyak Wildlife Conservation Trust, one of the most successful community conservation programmes in Kenya. The local Samburu communities have built up a community game guard system, eliminating elephant poaching from a wide area. They also generate revenue from wildlife through Sarara Tented Camp. The Trust is run by a board, democratically elected from the local community.



The case for UK Government action

The United Kingdom prides itself for standing at the forefront of animal welfare and conservation, which was most recently illustrated by the passage of the Hunting Act 2004. In addition, the Government has a stated commitment to its Sustainable Tourism Initiative (STI), which established a Travel Foundation to promote tourism that helps to preserve endangered wildlife and benefits local communities. (85) Prime Minister Tony Blair has also committed himself to tackling poverty in Africa, which he described as a "scar on the conscience of the world" in October 2001.

One extraordinarily positive way which the Government could further these commitments would be to take a moral stance against the slaughter of endangered species by banning the importation of trophy parts from any animal listed in CITES Appendix I. It would also be enormously beneficial to poor communities if the STI Travel Foundation supported and promoted the community-based eco-tourism initiatives above and investigated ways of assisting other communities to follow suit.

Taking this action against trophy hunting would be applauded by the wildlife conservation experts on the ground, who are desperate for assistance from the global community in preserving a future for the planet's most beloved and endangered animals.

PLEAS FROM ABROAD

Many of the groups we contacted in researching this report, included appeals to the UK Government to take action.

Chris Mercer of the Kalahari Raptor Society said:

"We cannot understand why the British Government would even hesitate in implementing a ban on the importation of trophies. Trophy hunting is devastating African wildlife and corrupting people and policies in Africa. It is a process whereby the public's wildlife heritage is transferred out of the public domain into the hands of hunters for cruel profiteering. The prize is some lifeless clutter to hang on some wretch's wall. If the import of trophies was banned then none of this would happen." (86)

Gareth Patterson, African environmentalist and author of Last of the Free and With My Soul Amongst Lions, said:

"The trophy hunting of Appendix I endangered species is not only ethically and morally wrong, but causes grave ecological implications, such as artificially induced infanticide of the offspring of the hunted animal and erosion of the overall genetic diversity of the particular species. The UK Government, and Governments elsewhere, should be encouraged therefore to ban the import of hunting trophies." (87)

Michael Wamithi, of the International Fund for Animal Welfare in Kenya, said:

"To ensure that hunting and the related illegal trade in wildlife do not lead to the extinction of endangered species, trade control and law enforcement mechanisms must first be in place. At this point in time, African Governments do not have the capacity or the political will to do this. There are more compelling needs, like health and education, competing for the same scarce Government resources. Corruption and poor governance are rife. Any trophy exports now will only achieve short term benefits and threaten long term community and national interests." (88)

Louise Joubert, of South Africa's Sanwild Trust, said:

"It is essential that Governments assist in conserving Africa's endangered species. One of the best options is to ban the import of endangered species hunting trophies. The South African conservation and law enforcement agencies have lost the ability, and in many cases the will, to control the hunting industry and enforce conservation laws. So-called 'sustainable' use can only be described as blatant exploitation and this has resulted in the unethical and illegal hunting of many endangered species. The global community must force South Africa to reconsider its conservation responsibilities." (89)

Michele Pickover, of Xwe Wild Life Investigation & Research Centre, said:

"The United Kingdom should not allow the importation of CITES Appendix I trophies from South Africa because of the unethical nature of the industry and the fact that animals that are killed for trophies come from ecologically unsustainable, privately-owned fenced 'game farms' where there is no community benefit. Most of Africa's wild life trophies come from South Africa where 'canned hunting' is fundamentally and inextricably linked to trophy hunting. The South African Government lacks the resources to police and regulate the industry. Finally, trophy hunting promotes a culture of violence and guns. This is in direct opposition to the needs of South African society, which is desperately trying to free itself from its violent past." (90)

Liesel Mortimer, Wildlife Action Group, South Africa, said:

"As a animal welfare group in South Africa we feel strongly that the trophy hunting industry in our country is riddled with unethical and immoral practices. We have seen first hand that the hunting

industry can be unscrupulous and that our authorities do not have the manpower or sufficient support from our Government and law enforcement to investigate and prosecute offenders. We need support and we are very grateful that the League Against Cruel Sports have taken up the issue regarding trophy hunting." (91)

And Johnny Rodrigues, of the Zimbabwean Conservation Task Force, most succinctly said:

"It goes without saying that importing trophies of endangered species should be banned by the British Government. I'm really shocked that they haven't already done it. The whole world should do it." (92)

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