



**ENDANGERED
WILDLIFE TRUST**
Protecting forever, together.

17 July 2018

Department of Environmental Affairs
Increase Captive Lion Bone Export Quota to 1,500

Start

In 2017, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) announced an annual export quota of 800 skeletons (with or without the skull) for the international trade in lion bones. This has now been increased to **1,500 skeletons**, effective from 7 June 2018.

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and partner organisations raised several concerns regarding the quota published in 2017 in our *Technical Response to the DEA's Proposed Captive Lion Bone Export Quota*.¹ We note with concern that many of these have yet to be addressed and further:

- There is still no evidence to show that the regulated trade in lion bones will not drive demand for wild lion projects, or evidence to show that it will alleviate pressure on wild lion populations.
- Field observations indicate that wild lions in southern Africa, specifically Mozambique, have been under increasing threat for their parts. The Greater Limpopo Carnivore Programme has recorded an escalation in the number of wild lions poached on the Mozambican side of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area, with a marked increase since 2015. They report that 26% of the lion population in this park has been lost due to poaching for their body parts.²
- In the year immediately preceding the quota (June 2016 to May 2017), 13 captive bred lions in South Africa were poached for their body parts. The EWT notes with concern that during the first year of the quota (June 2017 to May 2018) there were 12 poaching incidents, resulting in 31 lions being killed. These preliminary figures suggest that the poaching of captive lions in South Africa has more than doubled since the quota was established.
- The mandate to regulate welfare of captive carnivores remains confused as both the DEA and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries maintain that the welfare mandate is not their responsibility. We continue to have serious concerns about the welfare of captive

¹<https://www.ewt.org.za/media/2017/SA%20NGO%20Response%20to%20DEA%20Lion%20bone%20Quota%2026%20Jan%202017.pdf>

² <http://www.peaceparks.org/news.php?pid=1793&mid=1813>

lions.³ For instance, in May 2018, over 70 lions awaiting slaughter at an abattoir on the Wag-'n-Bietjie farm in the Free State were exposed to conditions that resulted in a case of animal cruelty being opened with the South African Police Service by the Bloemfontein Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. This case is still under investigation. Unacceptable welfare conditions include lions being held in small crates and being held without food or water.⁴ This case clearly illustrates an absence of proper monitoring and compliance with the law by participants in this trade. It is clear that South Africa is unable to ensure the adequate welfare and husbandry of lions bred for their bones.

- At the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) World Conservation Congresses held in Honolulu, Hawaii, in September 2016, a formal motion was passed to stop the canned hunting and non-conservation based captive breeding of lion and other predators. The international position is clearly against the captive breeding of wild animals for their parts.
- Finally, we are concerned for the reputational damage to Brand South Africa and the negative impact that lion bone farming and the related captive lion industry is having on South Africa's world-class conservation reputation.

The EWT is not aware of any formal public participation process or consultation prior to the decision to increase the annual lion bone export quota, and we have no further information on how or why this decision was made.

The EWT supports the sustainable use of natural resources when it directly contributes to species and habitat conservation efforts, and where communities meaningfully and directly benefit. We do not believe that farming lions for their parts is sustainable use but rather economic exploitation to benefit a select few.

The EWT calls for more transparency in decision making and calls on DEA to review this decision after full consultation and public participation has been undertaken. The EWT further calls for the welfare concerns surrounding captive carnivores to be addressed before any further decisions around the lion bone trade are taken.

End

About the Endangered Wildlife Trust

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), champion of conservation in Africa, has worked tirelessly for over 45 years to save wildlife and habitats, with our vision being a world in which both humans and wildlife prosper in harmony with nature. From the smallest frog, to the majestic rhino; from sweeping grasslands to arid drylands; from our shorelines to winding rivers: the EWT is working with you, to protect our world.

³ For more information on these welfare concerns, please read "*Fair Game? Improving the well-being of South African wildlife Review of the legal and practical regulation of the welfare of wild animals in South Africa, 2018*" accessible at <https://cer.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CER-EWT-Regulation-of-Wildlife-Welfare-Report-25-June-2018.pdf>. This report that was developed by the EWT and the Centre for Environmental Rights and was funded by the Lewis Foundation

⁴ <https://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/finger-pointing-by-dea-and-daff-leaves-lions-at-free-state-abattoir-in-limbo-15010739>

The EWT's team of field-based specialists is spread across southern and East Africa, where committed conservation action is needed the most. Working with our partners, including businesses and governments, the EWT is at the forefront of conducting applied research, supporting community conservation and livelihoods, training and building capacity, addressing human wildlife conflict, monitoring threatened species and establishing safe spaces for wildlife range expansion.

A beacon of hope for Africa's wildlife, landscapes and communities, the EWT is protecting forever, together. Find out more at www.ewt.org.za

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