



## **Facts About „Trophy“ Hunting**

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## Introduction

International hunting serves conservation purposes. Biodiversity benefits directly and indirectly from hunting by international hunting tourism (so-called “trophy hunting”) worldwide<sup>1</sup>. Hunting tourism takes place in regions where habitat and wildlife conservation take precedence over other forms of natural resource use.

International hunting generates incentives to reduce threats to wildlife, including employment and income for local communities. Common and endangered species benefit from effects of legal regulated (domestic and international) hunting programs. These conservation benefits are often disputed by ideologically motivated animal rights activists. However, wildlife conservation organisations, peer-reviewed literature, and empirical data refute the arguments of international hunting opponents.

## International Hunting Contributes to the Conservation of Endangered and Protected Species

Poaching, deforestation, agricultural use (crop farming and livestock), and uncontrolled mining, among other illegal, unsustainable, and unregulated land uses, destroy nature and thus wildlife habitat. As a result, more species are threatened with extinction today than ever before in human history. Additionally, invasive species, pollution, and climate change contribute to this threat.<sup>2</sup> In this context of declining biodiversity, the benefits of hunting become particularly clear. Sustainable, regulated hunting systems in Africa alone protect 30–50% more wildlife habitat than the total area of all national parks combined, curb poaching, and reduce the impact of invasive species.<sup>3 4</sup>

Compared to other forms of natural resource use involving wildlife (such as photographic tourism), hunting leaves a smaller carbon footprint.<sup>5</sup> Countries that employ hunting as part of their conservation programs tend to have stable or increasing populations of rare and endangered species. For example, savannah elephant populations are increasing in Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, and Tanzania.<sup>6 7 8</sup> White rhinoceros and black rhinoceros populations are growing in South Africa and Namibia, and polar bear subpopulations in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/i6855en/l6855EN.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/csp2.12670>

<sup>3</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-1795.2006.00034.x>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.perc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Economic-and-conservation-significance.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.perc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Economic-and-conservation-significance.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/E-CoP19-Inf-102.pdf>

<sup>7</sup>

<https://www.zimparks.org.zw/assets/downloads/WEBSITE%20CONTRIBUTIONS/Species%20Management%20Plans/Zimbabwe%20Elephant%20Management%20Plan%20-%20FINAL.pdf> and

[https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/gazetted\\_notices/nemba\\_elephantnormsstandards\\_g47984gon3010.pdf](https://www.dffe.gov.za/sites/default/files/gazetted_notices/nemba_elephantnormsstandards_g47984gon3010.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://the->

[eis.com/elibrary/sites/default/files/downloads/literature/An%20overview%20of%20elephant%20conservation%20and%20management%20in%20Namibia.pdf](http://the-eis.com/elibrary/sites/default/files/downloads/literature/An%20overview%20of%20elephant%20conservation%20and%20management%20in%20Namibia.pdf)

Canada are robust (e.g., M'Clintock Channel, Foxe Basin, and Gulf of Boothia).<sup>9,10</sup> The same is true for lions in Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and for leopards in Botswana, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.<sup>11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21</sup>

Not only do wildlife populations benefit from sustainable, regulated hunting, but neighbouring national parks also benefit from the migration of wildlife to and from hunting areas. Hunting areas can also serve as buffer zones between human settlement and national parks, reducing the risk of human-wildlife conflicts.<sup>22</sup> In contrast, countries that have imposed hunting bans (such as Kenya) have seen many species become severely decreased or extirpated.<sup>23</sup>

## International Hunting Minimally Impacts the Gene Pool and Population Dynamics of Species

Many hunters value species-specific age characteristics in foreign wildlife and trophies, such as scars, chipped horns, tusks, or worn teeth. These features typically appear in older animals that have already reproduced multiple times and passed their genes on to subsequent generations. Thus, hunting has no negative impact on the genetic diversity of wildlife populations.

For instance, only 0.3% of Botswana's elephant population (at least 130,000 animals) is hunted, with a scientifically recommended hunting quota of 0.5%.<sup>24 25</sup> Studies show that for lions, where removal of males can occasionally lead to infanticide, this risk is mitigated if a minimum age of six years is set for hunting.<sup>26</sup> This minimum age is legally mandated in Tanzania, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.iucn.org/press-release/202309/african-rhino-numbers-are-increasing-despite-poaching>

<sup>10</sup> <https://polarbearsinternational.org/polar-bears-changing-arctic/polar-bear-facts/status/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/15951/231696234>

<sup>12</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/31/Docs/E-AC31-29-02-A1.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/31/Docs/E-AC31-29-02-A3.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/31/Docs/E-AC31-29-02-A2.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/E-AC30-15-A1.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/E-AC30-15-A2.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/E-AC30-15-A3.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/E-AC30-15-A4.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/E-AC30-15-A5.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/E-AC30-15-A6.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/AC/30/Inf/E-AC30-Inf-32.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/almost-5000-wild-animals-being-moved-in-restocking/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0163249>

<sup>24</sup> DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & NATIONAL PARKS (DWNP) Non-detriment findings for *Loxodonta Africana* (African Elephant) Controlled Hunting in Botswana, with enhancement findings, and its assessment against the IUCN SSC "Guiding principles".

<sup>25</sup> [https://downloads.regulations.gov/FWS-HQ-IA-2021-0099-25854/attachment\\_1.pdf](https://downloads.regulations.gov/FWS-HQ-IA-2021-0099-25854/attachment_1.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6304326\\_Sustainable\\_trophy\\_hunting\\_of\\_Africa\\_lions](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6304326_Sustainable_trophy_hunting_of_Africa_lions)

and enforced by professional hunters in Zambia, where most wild lions are hunted, and there are state regulations for trophy exports.<sup>27 28 29</sup>

For other species, such as brown bear, studies indicate that hunting does not affect cub survival from infanticide.<sup>30</sup> Other studies even suggest that cub survival rates in hunting areas are significantly higher than in non-hunting areas.<sup>31</sup>

## Hunting Prevents Poaching

Hunting is strictly regulated by law, whereas poaching is inherently illegal. Bushmeat poaching, tusk and horn poaching, and retaliatory killing (e.g., for livestock damage or in response to human-wildlife conflict) are threats to many wildlife populations.

In well-funded hunting areas, poaching can be significantly reduced.<sup>32</sup> Hunting generates socio-economic incentives for people and their involvement in wildlife conservation, which helps curb poaching and prevent more intensive law enforcement measures. Anti-poaching units are costly and often funded by hunting revenue. For example, the DAPU (Dande Anti-Poaching Unit) reduced elephant poaching in the Dande Safari Area of Zimbabwe by 98% over 12 years (2010–2021).<sup>33</sup> Hunting concessions in Mozambique's Niassa Reserve contributed more to anti-poaching efforts than photo-tourism concessions, where most elephants were poached.<sup>34</sup>

A study in the Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania found no correlation between poaching and regulated elephant hunting but concluded that poaching of all other studied wildlife species had declined.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately for Tanzania and other countries, import restrictions in Euro-American jurisdictions or bans on hunting trophies result in revenue losses for hunting areas, potentially leading to abandonment.<sup>36</sup>

Poachers typically avoid areas with established hunting management and anti-poaching patrols. Hunting areas that must be abandoned due to import restrictions and bans no longer have protection against negative human impacts. Valuable habitats and their wildlife are lost, often permanently, as wildlife

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<sup>27</sup> <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1365-2664.12951>

<sup>28</sup> <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1365-2664.12951>

<sup>29</sup> Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Zambia Lion Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2023 - 2028). August 2023. Ministry of Tourism

<sup>30</sup>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232692628\\_Sexually\\_selected\\_infanticide\\_in\\_grizzly\\_bears\\_The\\_effects\\_of\\_hunting\\_on\\_cub\\_survival](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232692628_Sexually_selected_infanticide_in_grizzly_bears_The_effects_of_hunting_on_cub_survival)

<sup>31</sup>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288788958\\_Effects\\_of\\_hunting\\_on\\_brown\\_bear\\_cub\\_survival\\_and\\_litter\\_size\\_in\\_Alaska](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288788958_Effects_of_hunting_on_brown_bear_cub_survival_and_litter_size_in_Alaska)

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/3/1288>

<sup>33</sup> <http://dapuzim.com/index.html>

<sup>34</sup> [http://macroecointern.dk/pdf-reprints/Zafra-Calvo\\_JNC\\_2018.pdf](http://macroecointern.dk/pdf-reprints/Zafra-Calvo_JNC_2018.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> <https://academicjournals.org/journal/IJBC/article-full-text-pdf/D07409E65281>

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.conservationforce.org/files/ugd/87ac64\\_d878433beda0433f9e9d64c30f76450d.pdf](https://www.conservationforce.org/files/ugd/87ac64_d878433beda0433f9e9d64c30f76450d.pdf)

conservation authorities often lack the resources to adequately secure protected areas without hunting revenue.<sup>37</sup>

## International Hunting is Sustainable and Strictly Regulated

A common claim by hunting opponents is that hunting is unsustainable and uncontrolled. However, a look at management plans and regulatory frameworks reveals extensive laws and regulations that are technically and scientifically advanced in countries using hunting as a tool for wildlife management and conservation.

Species subject to hunting are regulated by quota systems in most African countries.<sup>38</sup> For example, Namibia's black rhinoceros population is approximately 2,100 animals, with a quota of 5 rhinos, representing just 0.23% of the population.<sup>39</sup> Legal hunting of black and white rhinoceros is sustainable, as only a small proportion of the population is hunted (old, aggressive bulls that no longer participate in reproduction and need to be managed). Both species are now more numerous in southern Africa than at the start of regulated hunting tourism and wildlife trade.

In times when rhinoceroses are increasingly seen as burdens to their custodians, and the revenues of protected areas have been significantly impacted by COVID-19, ending hunting and its crucial funding source would have negative consequences.

Hunting offtake is routinely lower than national quotas, which in turn are often lower than international export quotas imposed by an international treaty, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). For example, Tanzania's lion population is estimated at 16,000 animals, with a 2016 hunting quota of 200 and an actual offtake of 44 lions.<sup>40</sup> Namibia's leopard population is about 12,000 animals, with a CITES export quota of 250 leopards.<sup>41</sup> The highest harvest was in 2017, with 161 leopards hunted<sup>42</sup>, an export quota of 2% and an actual offtake of 1.3% of the total population. Tanzania's buffalo population exceeds 200,000 animals, with an average offtake quota of 1,000–2,000 and far fewer harvested (e.g., 2014 quota of 1,817 and 949 harvested).<sup>43</sup> The quota is <1% of the population, and the actual offtake is about half a percent.

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<sup>37</sup> <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/ful/10.1111/cobi.13943>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/bo583e/bo583e.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/document/E-Res-13-05-R18.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.conservationforce.org/files/ugd/87ac64\\_d878433beda0433f9e9d64c30f76450d.pdf](https://www.conservationforce.org/files/ugd/87ac64_d878433beda0433f9e9d64c30f76450d.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/E-AC30-15-A2.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.conservationfrontlines.org/2020/07/the-namibian-leopard-national-census-sustainable-hunting-practices/#:~:text=Since%20the%20implementation%20of%20the,hunting%20success%20rates%20remain%20unchanged>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/ecology-and-management-of-the-african-buffalo/D8D50917E96070F67D8A14907A12DCC4>

Numerous examples, including for the "Big 5" (i.e., elephant, rhino, lion, leopard, buffalo) demonstrate that hunting is sustainable, well-regulated and poses no threat to species. International Hunting Can Reduce Human-Wildlife Conflicts

Hunting opponents often portray wildlife as peaceful animals that only become dangerous to humans through hunting. However, reality is not a Disney movie: wildlife competes with humans for habitat and food.

Elephants, buffalo, and hippos eat crops and trample people; lions and leopards kill both livestock and humans. As these events increase both as human populations grow and wildlife ranges expand, wildlife is seen more as a nuisance than an asset. Indigenous peoples and local communities also often do not have full ownership, use or management rights over wildlife. People therefore retaliate with poaching and illegal killings (the leading cause of death for lions), with no regard for protecting parent animals or any form of selectivity (poisoned waterholes or baits kill any animal that ingests the poison).<sup>44 45</sup>

Besides poisoned baits, traps (such as snares) are used, which also kill indiscriminately, causing the trapped animal to suffer for hours or even days. Hunting, however, gives animals value from a human perspective: they are no longer just a threat to livelihoods but become the basis for it.

In Botswana, human-wildlife conflicts increased dramatically when hunting was banned: the number of recorded conflicts rose from 4,361 in 2012 to 6,770 in 2014.<sup>46</sup>

## Many Rural Communities Benefit from Hunting Revenue

A common accusation from anti-hunting organizations is that local communities do not benefit from hunting. On the contrary, they benefit from hunting through lease payments for hunting concessions, retention of trophy fees, investments that contribute to community development, jobs as hunting guides, gamekeepers, wildlife managers, and improved food security through legal access to meat.<sup>47</sup>

In countries like Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, hunting occurs on communal land and contributes to financial sustainability of community-based natural resource management programs... (Goergen et al., 2024).

Community involvement in hunting is regulated by administrative guidelines in respective countries. Unlike photo tourism, most hunting revenues remain on

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/15951/231696234> and

<sup>45</sup> <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0272272>

<sup>46</sup>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315588293\\_Effects\\_of\\_the\\_safari\\_hunting\\_tourism\\_ban\\_on\\_rural\\_livelihoods\\_and\\_wildlife\\_conservation\\_in\\_Northern\\_Botswana/link/5b6d922f299bf14c6d98ac0f/download?tp=eyJjb250ZXh0ljp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn19](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315588293_Effects_of_the_safari_hunting_tourism_ban_on_rural_livelihoods_and_wildlife_conservation_in_Northern_Botswana/link/5b6d922f299bf14c6d98ac0f/download?tp=eyJjb250ZXh0ljp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn19)

<sup>47</sup> <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/cobi.12467>

the continent and do not flow to international companies and brokers.<sup>48</sup> Most hunting company owners are citizens of African countries (88.8%).

For example, before Botswana's hunting moratorium in 2014, 75% of hunting revenues remained in the country, compared to only 27% of photo-tourism revenues.<sup>49</sup> In Namibia, a simulated hunting ban reduced the share of financially stable communal conservancies from 74 to 16%.<sup>50</sup>

Hunting opponents often try to reduce the economic benefit of hunting to per capita income, which discounts reality: hunting revenues are not only divided among individuals but are also often used for communal projects such as building and maintaining schools and clinics, providing scholarships, building wells, purchasing food, tools, and supplies, and compensating for crop damage and livestock loss. The benefits of these initiatives go far beyond issuing cheques to individuals.<sup>51</sup>

## International Hunting is Crucial for Protection of Wildlife Habitat

Habitat protection is the most important aspect of species conservation, with hunting as a crucial tool. Worldwide, more habitat for wildlife is managed and protected through hunting than through national parks (even in national parks, “wildlife management” is practised).

In Africa alone, 30–50% more land is secured through hunting than through national parks.<sup>52</sup> Another effect of hunting: in South Africa and Namibia, private landowners have shifted from livestock to wildlife on their land, leading to a massive increase in wildlife habitat and populations in both countries.<sup>53</sup> <sup>54</sup> This shift from livestock farming to wildlife reserves, funded by hunting, was also observed in Zimbabwe, with notable examples being Buby Valley and Save Conservancy.<sup>55</sup>

“Cecil” the lion would never have been born if farmers in Zimbabwe had not switched from livestock to wildlife years earlier. To protect cattle, his ancestors would have been shot or poisoned.

In Tanzania, more than 40% of the total land area is under some form of protection due to hunting. Hunting alone generates more than 70% of the Tanzanian Wildlife Authority's revenue, responsible for managing and protecting

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[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313272533\\_Poverty\\_or\\_riches\\_who\\_benefits\\_from\\_the\\_booming\\_tourism\\_industry\\_in\\_Botswana](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313272533_Poverty_or_riches_who_benefits_from_the_booming_tourism_industry_in_Botswana)

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/aj114e/aj114e09.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> <https://pastoralismjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/2041-7136-2-18>

<sup>51</sup> <https://zslpublications.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/acv.12840>

<sup>52</sup> [https://www.conservationforce.org/files/ugd/87ac64\\_d878433beda0433f9e9d64c30f76450d.pdf](https://www.conservationforce.org/files/ugd/87ac64_d878433beda0433f9e9d64c30f76450d.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> <https://pastoralismjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/2041-7136-2-18>

<sup>54</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257201404\\_Benefits\\_of\\_wildlife-based\\_land\\_uses\\_on\\_private\\_land\\_in\\_Namibia\\_and\\_limitations\\_affecting\\_their\\_development#:~:text=Wild%20life%20populations%20are%20increasing%20with,wildlife%20than%20in%20protected%20areas](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257201404_Benefits_of_wildlife-based_land_uses_on_private_land_in_Namibia_and_limitations_affecting_their_development#:~:text=Wild%20life%20populations%20are%20increasing%20with,wildlife%20than%20in%20protected%20areas)

<sup>55</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/InfDocs/E-CoP17-Inf-60.pdf>

most Tanzanian protected areas.<sup>56</sup> Simply, without hunting, the number of wildlife areas and communal conservancies would drastically decline, as they would no longer be financially viable.

Hunting restrictions and import bans on hunting trophies negatively impact protected and conserved areas across southern Africa (and in Europe, Central Asia, and North America) when hunting areas are abandoned for financial reasons. Ignoring this endangers what one seeks to protect: wildlife and their habitats.

## Photo-tourism is Not a Financially Viable Replacement for International Hunting

Animal rights organisations call for “shooting photos instead of animals.” However, this narrative consistently ignores one fact: neither hunting nor photo-tourism provide enough resources to protect high-level conservation areas from today's threats such as human encroachment, poaching, and habitat loss.<sup>57</sup> Both activities would need to be more heavily funded by third parties.

Without hunting, photo-tourism would need to protect and finance more than twice as much more land, just to keep currently protected areas level. But ninety percent of protected areas are already chronically underfunded. Photo-tourism cannot cover the costs of national parks, let alone the costs of hunting concessions.

Photo-tourism also leaves a larger carbon footprint, as more people are needed to match the revenue from hunting, so attempting to replace hunting with photo-tourism would result in additional climate impacts. In 2016, 46 hunters provided 61 percent of the Timbavati Reserve's funding in South Africa, while 24,000 tourists provided only 17 percent.<sup>58</sup> In 2018, the reserve increased prices for tourists, shifting funding to 21,000 visitors who provided 51 percent of the funds, while 21 hunters contributed 30 percent.<sup>59</sup> Although photo-tourism now provides most of the funding, the sheer number of tourists needed for this requires higher resource consumption, a larger carbon footprint, and more space for lodges and infrastructure. This is not sustainable in the long term.

## International Hunting is Ethically Justifiable and Complies with International and European Animal Welfare Laws

Animal welfare is a fundamental priority for international hunting, forming the ethical basis of modern hunting practices. This includes hunters' respect for humans, animals, and the environment, often exceeding legal requirements.

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<sup>56</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/InfDocs/E-CoP17-Inf-60.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.1805048115>

<sup>58</sup> <https://timbavati.co.za/sustainability-and-the-funding-of-the-timbavati-private-nature-reserve/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://timbavati.co.za/sustainability-and-the-funding-of-the-timbavati-private-nature-reserve/>

According to ethical hunting principles, hunting is compliant with animal welfare standards and serves a reasonable purpose within international animal welfare laws. Hunting significantly contributes to preventing and containing animal diseases, preventing damage to agriculture and forestry, securing or increasing biodiversity and wildlife habitats, and ensuring a high-quality, sustainable food source.<sup>60</sup>

International wildlife laws reflect the importance of welfare concerns. For instance, the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals and the European Union's Animal Welfare Strategy recognize the moral worth of animals and the necessity of welfare-centric approaches in wildlife law. These regulations ensure that hunting practices align with animal welfare standards, aiming for the humane and ethical treatment of wildlife.<sup>61</sup>

Unlike natural predation, hunters aim to kill wildlife quickly and humanely while considering the protection of parent animals. Scientific research supports that ethical hunting practices can be more humane than natural predation, where death can be prolonged and painful.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, "hunting trophies" of many wildlife species are considered important biological indicators of sustainable age class distribution and population health.<sup>63</sup>

Incorporating these ethical standards into international and European wildlife laws ensures that hunting is not only a legitimate form of land use but also a critical tool for species conservation and ecological balance.

## International Hunting and “Greenwashing”

"Greenwashing" usually refers to companies or industries pretending to be particularly "environmentally friendly." When this term is used against hunting, it is wrong in two ways.

First: numerous case studies demonstrate the positive impacts of hunting on many species. White rhinoceros, black rhinoceros, argali, bighorn sheep, lion, elephant, and markhor are key examples.<sup>64 65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3197/096327109X404771>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/transnational-environmental-law/article/abs/injecting-compassion-into-international-wildlife-law-from-conservation-to-protection/A3DA3CCD1B56D23D94BE35F8F2AB5A05>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/philosophy/article/abs/ethics-and-welfare-the-case-of-hunting/A2C9FB32B57D82008D808FED0D09AF1>

<sup>63</sup> [https://consensus.app/papers/wild-animal-welfare-international-present-position-scope-harrop/c40233b3d27d5dbfb6a72e6e13ba228a/?utm\\_source=chatgpt](https://consensus.app/papers/wild-animal-welfare-international-present-position-scope-harrop/c40233b3d27d5dbfb6a72e6e13ba228a/?utm_source=chatgpt)

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.lionlandscapes.org/post/lion-landscapes-contribution-to-the-call-for-evidence-animals-abroad-bill>

<sup>65</sup>

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315511020> The baby and the bathwater Trophy hunting conservation and rural livelihoods

Second: hunting is indeed environmentally friendly due to its sustainable, very low hunting quotas, lower carbon footprint compared to photo-tourism, and the area of protected habitat for wildlife.

An example of real greenwashing, however, is presenting blanket hunting bans as environmentally friendly, despite proven devastating impacts: countries like Kenya have lost over 70 percent of their megafauna since its hunting ban of 1977.<sup>66</sup>

## Import Bans on Hunting Trophies Negatively Affect Local Communities

Supporting bans on import of hunting trophies has almost become a hobby for celebrities and politicians in need of votes: it is easy to make headlines with misunderstood and ostentatious animal love and sell one's "eco-image." These celebrities are predominantly from the Global North, not from Africa (or Central Asia). The needs and rights of Africans, who have a completely different perspective on this issue, are often consciously ignored.<sup>67</sup>

Many indigenous peoples and local communities clearly express their rejection of import bans on hunting trophies. In joint letters to foreign governments such as the United Kingdom, they call for reconsideration of bans that would affect their livelihoods.<sup>68</sup> For example, the United States' (temporary) ban on elephant and lion trophies from Tanzania caused hunting revenues in many areas to plummet.<sup>69</sup> This money is missing from communities. Instead, they must find other income sources, leading to a rapid increase in livestock farming, poaching, charcoal production, and logging, with negative consequences for the wildlife living in these hunting areas.<sup>70</sup>

Hunting restrictions have caused great harm to both wildlife and local communities. In Botswana, most hunting areas could not be converted to photo-tourism during the hunting ban on communal and state land, causing them to lose almost all their income. This led to protests by local communities, demanding the government resume hunting, which happened in 2019.<sup>71</sup> When the United States listed polar bear on the Endangered Species Act, the loss of trade in hunting trophies negatively impacted the Inuit people: while the number of bears harvested did not decrease, as the Inuit now fulfilled their quota, the

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<sup>66</sup> <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0163249>

<sup>67</sup> <https://research.appinio.com/#/en/survey/public/YWg7zKzab>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.iol.co.za/saturday-star/news/southern-africa-community-leaders-pen-open-letter-to-uk-celebrities-over-trophy-hunting-653c082c-295a-40f4-b806-07c2cec39b5b>

<sup>69</sup> <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/cobi.13943>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0006320719306317>

<sup>71</sup>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315588293\\_Effects\\_of\\_the\\_safari\\_hunting\\_tourism\\_ban\\_on\\_rural\\_livelihoods\\_and\\_wildlife\\_conservation\\_in\\_Northern\\_Botswana](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315588293_Effects_of_the_safari_hunting_tourism_ban_on_rural_livelihoods_and_wildlife_conservation_in_Northern_Botswana)

financial income of Inuit communities dropped.<sup>72</sup> No bear was saved, but the indigenous population was disadvantaged.<sup>73</sup>

## Calls for Import Bans on Hunting Trophies and an End to International Hunting are Neo-Colonial

Decisions that affect hunting typically are made with the involvement of many different stakeholders, including local communities and through national community-based natural resource management programs. Ideologically motivated import bans on hunting trophies, however, are often imposed without any consultation or advice from the affected source countries, their governments/ministries, or directly affected local communities.<sup>74</sup>

This is an example of neo-colonial behaviour, as indigenous voices are ignored because they do not fit the desired narrative. Neo-colonialism is defined as the use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries. The anti-hunting movement fits this definition perfectly: it reduces local communities' and governments' revenues through import bans (economic), threatens mass boycotts of countries that allow communities to hunt on their land (political and economic), and imposes its own opinions and morals without considering the negative impact on other people in other countries (cultural).

In short: the anti-hunting movement presumes to make wildlife management decisions on behalf of African countries (and other continents). A clear case of neo-colonialism. In many public policy debates, the stated motivation for import bans is not for effective conservation or respect for African rights but strictly animal rights. It is not only crucial but also a matter of respect that the Global North listens to the information provided by governments in the southern hemisphere and local communities.

## Science is Neutral in the Debate on International Hunting

Science is objective and unbiased and therefore does not tend towards either hunters or hunting opponents in the debate. The motives for hunting are diverse and usually occur simultaneously.<sup>75</sup>

Many scientific papers, studies, statements, and theses highlight the benefits and importance of hunting, while many others point out the problems and shortcomings of trophy hunting. Both hunting and photo-tourism are led by

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<sup>72</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/story/5473/greenpeace-apology-to-inuit-for-impacts-of-seal-campaign/>

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<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989415000074#:~:text=In%20Nunavut%2C%20w here%20most%20of,sport%20hunters%20from%20specific%20populations>

<sup>74</sup> <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/COP/19/resolution/E-Res-06-07.pdf>

<sup>75</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235433274\\_On\\_the\\_multifunctionality\\_of\\_hunting-An\\_institutional\\_analysis\\_of\\_eight\\_cases\\_from\\_Europe\\_and\\_Africa/link/57a2235708ae5f8b258b8b1d/download?tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn09](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235433274_On_the_multifunctionality_of_hunting-An_institutional_analysis_of_eight_cases_from_Europe_and_Africa/link/57a2235708ae5f8b258b8b1d/download?tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn09)

people with self-interests, which can lead to issues in both industries that need to be addressed. Corruption prevalent in poor countries negatively affects all industries, including hunting tourism.

"Whitewashing," or concealing existing problems, ultimately harms conservation and international hunting. Instead, continuous improvements must be made. Many important changes have been implemented based on adaptive management. It is counterproductive to ignore scientists' findings just because they do not fit a particular image, whether of hunting supporters or opponents.

When examining the data impartially, it becomes clear that hunting, photo-tourism, and a diversity of wildlife economy land uses have their place in wildlife and species conservation. They complement each other and can, when sustainably designed, contribute to the conservation of species and their habitats.

## High Acceptance of International Hunting in Europe

More than half of the citizens in five EU countries accept international hunting if it promotes species conservation and complies with international regulations.<sup>76</sup>

According to a survey conducted in late 2023, only 23 percent of respondents from Italy, Denmark, Poland, Spain, and Germany oppose hunting by Europeans abroad. Germans have an approval rate of 55 percent, above the EU average. Danes top the list with 66 percent of respondents in favour of hunting trips abroad. Italians are the most critical, with 34 percent of respondents.

A new survey also indicates that the public's opinion on trophy hunting is pragmatic, not dogmatic<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>76</sup> <https://www.face.eu/2024/01/new-survey-sheds-light-on-european-acceptance-of-so-called-trophy-hunting/>

<sup>77</sup> <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rspb.2023.1638>