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Federal Member for La Trobe



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VIP

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RECEIVED 26 MAR 2014 Environment Minister

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The Hon Greg Hunt
Minister for the Environment

VIP
26 MAR 2014

RE: (Canned Hunting and importation into Australia of CITES-listed animals)



Dear Minister,

Recently I became aware of the barbaric practise of ('canned hunting' of African lions.)

Some of the things I have seen and been informed of have shocked me.

There is no precise definition of 'canned hunting', but it generally refers to hunts where native or exotic animals are confined by fencing so as to increase the chance of the hunter achieving a kill. The Humane Society of the United States refers to these as 'captive' hunts.

Canned hunting of Africa lions is big business and allows a lion to be killed in an enclosed area for around \$40,000 and for the so called hunter to take their 'trophy' back home for display.

What is also disturbing is that many young Australians travel to Africa and work on some 'conservation parks'. The participants pay around \$700 per a week for the experience to nurture orphaned lion cubs back into the wild. The sad reality is that there is a huge deception taking place as many of these so called conservation parks are actually the breeding ground for the canned hunting of lions industry.

Viewing African Websites such <http://www.africanskyhunting.co.za/> illustrates how they pride themselves on trophy hunts and not just with lions.

It is difficult to get specific information on the size and extent of canned hunting of African lions but anecdotal evidence indicates it is a much wider practise than thought.

There are no overall estimates of canned hunts in South Africa. However the extent of captive-bred hunting of lions in South Africa can be estimated from the fact that only an average of 8 wild lions were legally shot each year in 2009 and 2010, while over 750 lion trophies were exported in those same years. Lion hunting in South Africa now almost entirely involves the hunting of captive-bred lions in private game parks

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) lays down guidelines on importation of all trophy kills and the Department of Environment uses this information as its guide in Australia.

As you know CITES is one of the largest and oldest conservation and sustainable use agreements in existence. Participation is voluntary, and countries that have agreed to be bound by the Convention are known as Parties. Australia has been a Party since 1976.

Although CITES is legally binding on the Parties, it does not take the place of national laws. Rather it provides a framework respected by each Party, which must adopt their own domestic legislation to implement CITES at the national level.

As the Minister for the Environment you have carriage over abiding by the CITES principles through legislation in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

A permit from the Minister for the Environment will (usually) be required to import trophies derived from animals listed in the CITES Appendices. The requirements for obtaining such a permit differ depending on whether the relevant species is listed in Appendix I, II or III.

Under Appendix II nearly all species of wild cat including the African lion are listed.

Trophy type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Body mounts	1		9	2		10
Bones			6			6
Cape		1				1
Claws			54		18	72
Head mounts		2				2
Hunting trophy	1	4		6	1	12
Shoulder cape		3				3
Skins	1	2	3	5	1	12
Skulls	1	6	7	6	2	22
Taxidermied animal			1			1
Whole animal					1	1
Total	4	18	80	19	23	144

Annual numbers of African lion (*Panthera leo*) hunting trophies imported into Australia each year since 2010

The table above shows the number of African lion trophies imported into Australia (a trophy can also be a part).

In 2013 for instance the following African lion trophy 'parts' were imported into Australia:-

- 2 x body mounts

- 6 x hunt trophies
- 5 x skins
- 6 x skulls

While these and the other figures in the table are sobering, they do not tell how many African lions were actually killed and whether or not they were killed in a canned hunting environment. Statistics are reported around species not how they were killed.

Minister, my findings made me believe Australia should not allow the importation of any African lion parts.

CITES Appendix II clearly states the specimen must be legally obtained. Therefore, if the proponents of gamed hunting are stating lions are bred for conservation purposes but instead used for canned hunting this is deception.

Secondly CITES declares that a species cannot be exported if there is concern of the survival of the species.

In Appendix II the African Lion (*Panthera leo*) has its listed status vulnerable, as there has been a species population reduction of approximately 30% in the past two decades.

But as a government we should take the importing CITES Appendix I and II species more seriously.

I firmly believe we should change the Australian Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) section 303CB to not only to stop imports of canned hunting African lion body parts but stop all species listed under CITES Appendix I and Appendix II from being imported. I understand this can be done by making a declaration under section 3030CB of the EPBC Act to this effect.

And finally Minister I believe morally this would be the right decision for the Government to make.

Politically I believe this has similar elements to the live animal export public reaction.

I think stopping the importation into Australia of all CITES Appendix I and Appendix II would be a triumph for the Government and yourself for protecting the future of our international wildlife

I have attached three recent Parliamentary Library reports on this subject for your information and a copy of Appendix I, II and III of CITES.



Jason Wood

Federal Member for La Trobe

Att

- Parliamentary Library Documents:-
 - 1. Importation of Hunting Trophies of CITES Listed Species**
 - 2. Importation of canned hunting trophies into Australia**
 - 3. Status of CITES-listed animals being imported into Australia as trophies**
- Appendix I, II and III of CITES