



**ANIMAL  
RIGHTS  
AFRICA**

## **HUNTING IN SOUTH AFRICA: A BLOODY MESS**



**JULY 2010**



**Animal Rights Africa**

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## ACRONYMS

APNR	Association of Private Nature Reserves
CHASA	Confederation of South African Hunting Associations
CITES	Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna
KNP	Kruger National Park
PHASA	Professional Hunters Association of South Africa
SANParks	South African National Parks
SAPBA	South African Predator Breeders Association
SGP	Sabie Game Park
TOPS	Threatened and Protected Species regulations

## PROLOGUE

South Africa is the world's top 'canned' lion hunting destination, the rhino hunting permit system has been repeatedly abused in recent years to launder horn into the illegal medicine market in the East and some hunters are shooting animals which live in the Kruger National Park and cross unfenced boundaries into private and provincial nature reserves.

The country has an ever-growing hunting industry and a large number of private farms and provincial and private nature reserves raise money by allowing animals to be killed by local and foreign hunters.

As this report shows some hunters themselves argue that quest for increased economic returns and bigger trophy animals sometimes overrides what they view as "accepted practice". Some private farms are overstocked and also populated with species that do not occur in the region in order to generate greater hunting income, hybrid and colour-variant animals are specially bred for hunting despite the disapproval of formal hunting organisations and in many instances animals have no chance of escape and are shot under conditions that amount to 'canned hunting'.

Over 1000 lions were killed in 2008 at a time when most people believed the industry had been stopped. It has not and still continues pending a court appeal. The Department of Water and Environmental Affairs has no current figures for the number of lions hunted.

But despite the size of the hunting industry in South Africa it is poorly monitored, partly because many provincial departments are cash strapped and many experience skills shortages. The overall picture of what happens in the hunting industry is further clouded by poor record-keeping at provincial and national government level. Animals are suffering extensively as a result.

Although South African National Parks (SANParks) has regularly denied that animals from the Kruger National Park are shot in provincial and private nature reserves that share unfenced boundaries with the Kruger, international hunters boast that they have killed elephant and buffalo which have crossed from the park.

In the past SANParks has claimed that these animals are *Res Nullius* (i.e. they belong to no-one) once they leave the formal Kruger Park area and enter provincial and private reserves but this argument is irrational bearing in mind that SANParks has agreed that the Kruger's boundary fences be removed to allow the movement of animals, acknowledges that animals do indeed move freely between the areas, sits on management committees of these reserves and also helps decide the hunting quotas. Although SANParks recently acknowledged, contrary to previous denials, that animals move freely between these areas it refuses to publically acknowledge they may be shot. It is astounding that South Africa's precious heritage, in the form of animals that move across imaginary boundaries from the Kruger National Park (which is widely regarded as a national asset and one of the jewels of the country's conservation programme), are intentionally being allowed to be hunted and killed for profit with the fervent support and consent of the South African government and all its conservation agencies. Ordinary South Africans should be extremely concerned

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<sup>1</sup> Canned hunting is the 'put and take' practice of offering a captive, and often tame, animal, which usually has nowhere to run.

The argument here is not whether hunting is legal in South Africa or not, it is whether SANParks is fulfilling its mandate to protect animals within National Parks. Allowing animals to be shot in areas which, as tourist operators, some hunters and SANParks themselves advertise, are part of an unfenced natural area which forms the Greater Kruger National Park is, we believe, a contravention of this mandate and the organisations' responsibility to the people of South Africa in terms of the Protected Areas Act, 57 of 2003 (as amended by Act 31 of 2004), which prohibits certain 'extractive activities' in national parks, including hunting.

*Animal Rights Africa* has attempted to get clarity from SANParks on this issue but has been met with incomplete and inadequate answers and referrals to provincial authorities. If the Government approves of the hunting of animals that cross from Kruger into provincial and private reserves they should proudly say so publicly – in other words Government must tell South Africa and the world that they do not mind if national assets are killed for the enrichment of a few hunting outfitters and entertainment of a handful of rich foreigners.

According to research by the University Of North West in Potchefstroom, of more than a million wild animals are killed by hunters every year, some for meat but some just because they have large horns, tusks, or pretty coats. Some, like African wild cats and genets, for example, are killed simply for fun and target practice. The Government supports this killing, arguing that hunting in South Africa is in line with concept of 'sustainable utilisation of natural resources'. Ethics and scientific justification appear not to come into it.

As this report shows, hunting, and the ethics of allowing it, in South Africa is in urgent need of widespread public scrutiny, debate and action.

*Michele Pickover*  
*Animal Rights Africa Coordinator*  
4 July 2010

## INTRODUCTION

“Hunting - the ultimate form of speciesism.” *Peter Singer*

South Africa has the largest hunting industry in sub-Saharan Africa. It is Africa’s most popular destination for foreigners wishing to kill anything from elephants and buffalo to the 4.5 kilogram blue duiker and 1.6 kilogram genet. South Africa also has a large domestic recreational hunting industry. In addition bushmeat hunting, usually referred to as ‘poaching’, takes place in many parts of the country.

South Africa remains the worlds’ top destination for the hunting of captive raised lions and is also the premier market for those wishing to shoot rhinos.

Foreign and local hunting operators also say they are shooting animals that move into hunting areas from the Kruger National Park (KNP) and that it serves as a strong gene pool for animals considered to be excellent trophy animals, in the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR – which includes the Timbavati, Klaserie, Balule and the Umbabat Private Nature Reserves) and the Makuya and Mthimkhulu Provincial Nature Reserves, all of which share unfenced boundaries with the Kruger National Park.

SANParks has a mandate to protect the biodiversity of the Kruger National Park, including large mammals which are regarded as national assets. The Protected Areas Act, 57 of 2003 (as amended by Act 31 of 2004), prohibits certain ‘extractive activities’ in national parks, including hunting. Nonetheless, at the time of writing this Report, hunting is taking place in reserves which share open boundaries with the Kruger National Park, although the Chief Executive Officer of SANParks, Dr David Mabunda told Parliament in March 2010 that his organisation believes that hunting in contract parks should be prohibited. Publicly, South African National Parks (SANParks) has recently denied that animals from the Kruger National Park are hunted in these reserves.

In response to recent questions from *Animal Rights Africa*, Dr Hector Magome, Managing Executive: Conservation Services at SANParks, conceded that animals do move freely between the Kruger National park and the Mthimkhulu and Makuya Reserves. This being the case it is not clear why SANParks is unwilling to admit that animals that are under their protection are being shot by hunters and that hunting operators are financially benefiting.

After almost a decade of inaction, and despite public pressure, in 2007, the then Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism finally attempted to introduce laws to make the hunting of captive raised lions less economically attractive to hunting operators. The matter has been before the courts since then as it is being challenged by the South African Predator Breeders Association (SAPBA). The number of captive lions trophy hunted has rocketed since the 2007 court challenge and the SAPBA estimated that in 1 050 lions were hunted in 2008 compared to the 700 the previous year. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (now the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs) has not been able to supply figures for 2008, 2009 or 2010. It has also consistently failed to address the issue of the welfare of the approximately 4000 lions still in captivity and also what may happen to them if, as they have threatened, predator breeders decide to abandon the animals if the courts decision removes their economic value by restricting lion hunting.

The South African trophy hunting industry is not only growing quickly but it is also extremely difficult to monitor or police and is fast becoming a front for poaching and illegal activities as the current war on rhinos has shown. The hunting industry is far from being under control. Canned hunting has not been outlawed and the reality is that most trophy and sport hunting in South Africa is canned to a greater or lesser extent. South Africa also boasts that it is the world premier rhino hunting destination. Simultaneously though, more rhinos have been killed illegally in South Africa during 2008, 2009 and 2010 than at any other time in the last 90 years and the government and hunting organisations admitted last year that the hunting permit system has been inefficiently administered and was used to launder rhino horns into the illegal medicine trade.

Although the situation with regards to lion and rhino hunting has attracted widespread attention and criticism, the hunting of all species has increased significantly over the past ten years and figures provided by the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA) to hunting publications show that in 2007 about 16 000 foreign hunters visited the country and killed approximately 48 000 animals. Recreational, or 'biltong hunting' is also widely undertaken and a study by the University of the North-West estimated that 'biltong hunters' kill more than one million animals annually.

Despite the scale of the industry many hunting regulations are poorly enforced and provincial and national officials do not collect and collate the relevant data - a failing which draws into question the basis on which many environmental governance decisions are taken. Many officials, by the governments' own admission, either misunderstand or fail to apply national environmental regulations such as the Threatened and Protected Species regulations (TOPS). The Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs conceded to Parliament last year that some provincial issuing authorities "seem to have some challenges constraining the effective implementation of the Threatened and Protected Species (TOPS) Regulations." (Question No. 310: National Assembly, 3 July 2009)

In August 2009, the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs also admitted that her Department does not have an electronic permit system that allows it to collate the numbers of hunting permits issued nationally and if it requires information it has to contact each province. Neither are provinces electronically linked to each other, so if transgressions occur in one province other provinces are not made aware of this (Parliamentary Question No. 305, 3 July 2009). In the same reply to Parliament the Minister said that the Department "does not have information on the number of hunting permits issued for a particular species across the country." The Department does not keep a national register of professional hunters and there is no limit to the number of hunters permitted. (Question No. 779: National Assembly, 14 August 2009)

Hunting of hybrid species, or species bred for colour variances, is also common although the Confederation of South African Hunting Associations (CHASA), the largest grouping of hunting organisations in the country, asserts that it does not approve of the practice. CHASA also states that it is opposed to the artificial enhancement of trophy animals through artificial insemination, unnatural breeding programmes, and cloning. Nevertheless, colour variants such as copper springbok, black impala, golden wildebeest and other hybrid species are indeed hunted, and often fetch higher prices than common species. A golden oryx was recently sold at the Kirkwood wildlife auction in the Eastern Cape which is partly sponsored by SANParks.

The South African government regularly states that the hunting industry operates in line with the concept of sustainable utilisation of natural resources as espoused by the IUCN (International Conservation Union) and argues that hunting and allied businesses, which includes wildlife breeding,

wildlife capture and transportation and taxidermists, contribute significantly to the central revenue fiscus and creates jobs. However, it is unclear how government decides what constitutes sustainable hunting as much of it takes place on private land and is not independently monitored. Moreover, the ethics of allowing hunting is deliberately evaded. There is an urgent need for public debate on the issue within the South African context.

Hunting in South Africa is often divided into two segments: the local recreational hunting industry – sometimes known as “biltong hunting” – and trophy hunting which attracts a high percentage of foreign clients. There is some overlap between the two and South African biltong hunters also participate in trophy hunting.

Nearly all South African hunting farms are fenced, although some cover large areas. Most farms are divided into ‘camps’, fenced divisions of the total land area which makes it difficult for larger species to move from one area to the other. Many “game farmers” regularly buy wild animals at auctions to restock their land after hunting has depleted existing populations. Many “game farmers” feed the wildlife on their land. Some do so to maintain artificially high populations and others do so to sustain the wildlife during winter months.

In some instances species are also placed on land outside their normal range. For example Nyala only occur naturally in South Africa in low altitude sub tropical bush but are sometimes placed on Highveld grasslands and hunted there. Blesbok, a grassland species, are sometimes put onto bushveld farms and hunted.

Species that do not occur naturally in South Africa are also bred or bought on auction for hunting on some farms. Lechwe, which do not occur naturally in South Africa are regularly hunted as are Barbary sheep, fallow deer and a range of other species.

Some wildlife breeders also use a variety of intensive breeding programmes and genetic experimentation to try and breed animals that have longer horns or are larger than other specimens. Many hunters and ‘game farmers’ claim that there is more game on the land than at any time in the last 100 years and attribute this to the financial attraction of hunting. However, some experts point out that this is at the expense of true biodiversity with some species being favoured over others.

Many ‘game farmers’, for example, remove all predators from their farms because they do not want to lose antelope that could be sold to hunters and other species, as indicated above, are placed on land outside of their natural range.

Bow hunting takes place in many parts of the country too. Modern bows and arrows are capable of killing the largest animals although legislation prohibits the hunting of elephants, rhinos and most large predators with bows.

When hunting antelope and smaller animals most bow hunters construct hides at water holes and shoot the animals as they arrive to drink.

Habitat loss and hunting (which includes poaching) are generally accepted as being the greatest threats today to wildlife populations. Even so, trophy hunters maintain that their pastime is sustainable and humane. They say that the activity benefits the local communities in which they operate, providing revenue, jobs and protection to wildlife from poaching. Evidence is emerging,

however, from several regions, including Africa and Canada, where trophy hunting takes place, which questions the credibility of such claims.

Apart from the ethical and compassionate issues, hunting is a 'consumptive use' practice that has significant environmental impacts and actively interferes with many ecosystem processes. It influences genetic diversity and composition of species; populations in terms of size, density, distribution, structure, dynamics and behaviour; and condition of habitats. Hunting also exerts negative impacts on other animal species, plants and ecosystems in general. Genetic studies of wild populations in which trophy hunting takes place have shown that body weight and horn size have declined significantly over time. Trophy hunting disturbs the sex or age structure in such a way that the mating system is disrupted and the fertility and survival of certain sectors of the population and the offspring sex ratio may all be affected. The removal of even a few targeted individuals could have similar consequences. There is also growing concern amongst scientists about the undesirable evolutionary consequences of trophy hunting on wild populations.

According to Johannes Haasbroek, a former professional hunter who heads the Elephant-Human Relations Aid (EHRA) organisation in Namibia, the notion of trophy hunting is "a complete fallacy". "When you hunt for a trophy, you look for the biggest and best animal you can find for your client. It is very likely to be an animal in his breeding prime. It has been proven that trophy hunting manipulates the genetic stock over time by eradicating the carriers of the largest horns and tusks." (*The Namibian*, [www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=28&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=5952&no\\_cache=1](http://www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=28&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=5952&no_cache=1))

Hunters and hunting advocates insist that trophy hunting is of major importance for conservation in Africa. However, there is a distinct lack of a critical mass of empirical data to support this view. This uncertainty is partly due to a lack of objective information regarding the economic and conservation impact of hunting. The paucity of robust, empirical and independent research also restricts the ability to evaluate the effect of hunting in South Africa. In addition, one cannot examine or permit trophy hunting without simultaneously interrogating bushmeat (there is a body of evidence to suggest that bushmeat hunting, at present levels, is a major threat to the conservation of biodiversity) and other threats. This has particular resonance, as stated in the Convention on Biological Diversity: "against the backdrop of increasingly fragile and threatened ecosystems, habitat degradation, loss of biodiversity imposed by human pressures, and the increasing rate of anthropogenic extinction any human tendencies that further threaten the life sustaining natural processes of the planet need to be critically analysed and evaluated."

In an attempt to draw attention away from its bloody nature, the industry and its supporters argue that revenue from trophy hunting benefits communities and South Africa generally. Indisputably, it generates significant revenue and is a lucrative business. However, the overall economic justifications for trophy hunting have not been independently corroborated or properly investigated. Furthermore, there is uncertainty about how the so-called economic benefits of trophy hunting are being used. There is little evidence that the revenues generated are reinvested in the preservation of wilderness and protecting wild animals. It is also unclear who benefits. It appears that most of the profit goes to individuals within the industry. Despite the proliferation of hunting farms, they are declining in profitability and the possibilities of job creation within the industry are very limited. One critic, Saliem Fakir, has suggested that 'the continued promotion of hunting is being justified by rather erroneous cost-benefit analysis' and that industry stalwarts have skilfully manipulated the political language of the time to paint a righteous face for the industry.

While *Animal Rights Africa* believes that all hunting is wrong this document is intended provide an overview of the current situation in South Africa.

Although this document quotes from a number of hunting sites and written accounts from individual hunters, *Animal Rights Africa* in no way implies that these organisations or individuals have taken part in any illegal activity.

## TROPHY HUNTING

Around the globe, millions of animals are killed annually for ‘sport’ in the form of trophy hunting. Trophy hunting is a brutal activity that is all the more callous and culpable because it involves gratuitous killing. South Africa is not only the leading advocate of trophy hunting on the African continent but also one of the leading hunting capitals of the world – second to the United States of America and probably the leader in the hunting of lion, rhino and elephant.

The word *trophy* means a memorial of a victory in war, consisting of spoils taken from the enemy as a token of victory and power. It is within this domain of conquest, exploitation, and elitism that a war is being waged against animals. Trophy hunting is about being able to kill at will and getting pleasure from having power over life and death. Notions of ethics do not enter into it. Trophy hunting may be a lucrative business, particularly the killing of the so-called ‘big five’, but there is a dark and repugnant side to the hunting industry. It invites exploitation and abuse at all levels and raises issues of class, societal values, economics, science, genetics and ideology and involves debates about ownership, race, ritual, the culture of guns, dehumanisation and societal violence in general. Trophy hunting, like colonialism, is about power and it has its roots in imperial practices of control and annexation. Several authors have noted the similarity between dominion over animals and dominion over perceived and so-called ‘savage races’, and how the two went hand in hand in colonial days. In modern-day trophy hunting, the thrill of danger and the sense of triumph are the same. It is essentially about domination and humiliation. It remains a symbol of colonialism, paternalism, conspicuous consumption, power and control, abuse and subjugation.

The South African trophy hunting industry is located within the right wing pro-gun lobby and sixteen years after democracy it remains almost exclusively white-controlled and untransformed by the democratising process. Indeed, hunting-centred ‘conservation’ continues to flourish as it did during apartheid and is on the increase. The colonial killing sprees continue to be admired and imitated by the modern hunting fraternity who hanker after this lost era of endless killing. Notorious hunters from the colonial era, who described their hunting expeditions in minute and bloodthirsty detail, are idolised in modern hunting publications, which carry similar stories of modern-day hunting trips. Today the slaughter continues, in an updated form, with all its added weaponry, vehicles, comfort and sophisticated technology, within the current political framework of ‘development’ and the support of current ‘conservation’ policies. At the core of the trophy hunting industry in South Africa are issues of power, exploitation, domination of ‘the Other’, and the siphoning off of ‘resources’ from the South to the North.

The industry in South Africa panders to a well-heeled international elite - hunters largely from the North. Overwhelmingly, most African hunting trophies originate from South Africa and overseas hunters describe the country as a ‘hunting wonderland’. It is fast becoming one of the most popular trophy hunting destinations in the world. But although it may be a hunter’s paradise, for the animals

it is hell on earth. Wild animals are being used to satisfy the desires of a small minority of people who enjoy killing healthy living beings for fun. And when it comes to issues of conservation, what the hunting community is working hard at is conserving itself and government's current pro-hunting policies. The pro-hunting lobby has the ear of government, while the voices in opposition are met with deafness.

South Africa is a popular destination for foreign trophy hunters, particularly those that want to kill the so-called 'Big 5' – elephant, rhino, lion, buffalo and leopard. A wide range of other species are also hunted, including antelope, down to the tiny 4.5kg blue duiker as well as hippos and crocodiles. Some hunters even pay to shoot baboons, African wildcat, jackals, genets and other small species.

Once selected for trophy hunting, large species in South Africa, such as elephant, rhino and lions have almost no chance of escaping a hunter; although in some instances the hunt may take days. This also applies to high value species such as Sable which are placed on relatively small areas of land to ensure that the hunter gets the trophy he (or she) has purchased. (This is not always the case when hunting takes place on private and provincial reserves which share unfenced boundaries with the Kruger National Park because animals may flee into the park and according to hunting agreements may not be pursued within the Park.)

Most elephant hunting in South Africa takes place on fenced land. 'Game farmers' know their land well and also where the elephants are likely to be found. In many instances trackers follow trophy animals for days to ensure that hunters paying high prices will not be disappointed. In some instances hunting operators use microlight aircraft or even helicopters to locate the animals, log their location using a Global Positioning System (GPS) and direct the professional hunter and his client to the area.

Professional hunters accompany trophy hunters and are required to kill an animal if wounded by a client. There is little danger to the client although sometimes accidents do occur.

Most foreign hunters tend to be wealthy males over 40. Fees include the trophy fees, community and concession fees where applicable, transportation, accommodation, professional hunters fees, taxidermy and other sundries. Hunting packages usually include the cost of a professional hunter which ranges from \$350 to \$600, and higher, a day.

Prices are usually quoted in US dollars and occasionally Euros. Prices vary according to species, the sex of the species, size of horns/tusks and region. A trophy white rhino can fetch \$100 000, large male lions, \$40 000, elephants \$25 – \$60 000, buffalo \$7000 - \$14 000 and leopards \$7000 - \$8 000. Lionesses can be shot for as little as \$5 000 (as discussed below the vast majority of lions hunted in South Africa have been raised in captivity). Sable antelope have recently been advertised at \$12 000 to \$14 000 and Giraffe at \$3 000 to \$4 000. Although large animals are the primary attraction for most hunters many other species are killed: African wild cat (\$300 - \$350), baboon (\$50 to \$100), black backed jackal (\$55 to \$150) and caracal (\$600 to \$ 1 300). Many of these animals are regarded as problem animals by the South African authorities and foreign hunters also shoot them for fun or target practice.

For examples of hunting packages advertised on the Internet see **Annexures 1-3:**

[www.globalhuntingresources.com/southafrica.htm](http://www.globalhuntingresources.com/southafrica.htm)

<http://huntnetwork.net/modules/smartsection/item.php?itemid=60>

[www.shingalana.co.za/hunting\\_available\\_at\\_shingalana.html](http://www.shingalana.co.za/hunting_available_at_shingalana.html)

In an article published on their website ([www.phasa.co.za](http://www.phasa.co.za)) in October 2009, PHASA noted that for the period 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007, 16,394 overseas hunters hunted in the country for an average of four days each. “A total of 46,727 animal species were hunted. This amounts to a total revenue from daily rates, animals hunted and taxidermy work of US\$ 91,212,875 million (approximately R730 million).” These figures have not been independently verified.

Stewart Dorrington, a former president of PHASA, in an article entitled *The Professional Hunting Industry in South Africa: History & Future* (published in January 2010 on [www.africanhunting.com](http://www.africanhunting.com)<sup>2</sup> - an online resource for hunters and hunting operators), argues that while he believes the professional hunting industry played an essential role in conservation and was invaluable to the economic development of the country, it also has had negative impacts. “The tremendous growth has not been without problems. Most of them are still with us and are growing. The adage ‘if it pays it stays’ became well accepted, even if the species in question had little or no conservation value. In addition, many landowners had little idea of game farming, they had little idea of habitat requirements for different species and little idea for the need to preserve biodiversity, etc. ...Game that was in demand was sought, irrespective of other factors. Farmers had found an alternative to domestic stock, with attractive financial returns. In consequence species were moved to areas where they had never occurred before, different genetic groups were mixed and populations were manipulated purely to make money for the game farmer. Conservation was often forgotten. Economics became the main driving force.”

According to Dorrington, “The ethical standards of professional hunting were also compromised. Many new PHs [professional hunters] and some older ones too have let economics supersede the principles of fair chase. Canned lion hunts and unacceptable put and take practices emerged. Some hunting safaris became shooting sprees, with no hunting involved... This has been driven by some trophy hunters demanding to improve on or to collect large trophy animals or multiple species within a very short safari. The SCI [Safari Club International] record book has helped to erode the principles of fair chase further as some clients don’t seem to care how their trophy is obtained as long as it meets their requirements. For some, tight economics also compromised fair chase.”

In some instances trophy animals are placed on very small properties where they have no chance of escape and will be killed in a few days at most. In some instances farmers guarantee trophy sizes. Some hunting outfitters also offer specially bred hybrids and animals with unusual colour variations even though the formal hunting industry has repeatedly expressed its opposition to the practice.

### **Trophy Hunting: Taking Aim at Non-Consumptive Wildlife Tourism**

Trophy hunting, as a human-based activity, is not pro-poor and it certainly is not pro-wildlife, nor does it not develop sustainable local economies. In contrast, it is non-consumptive, ethical wildlife ecotourism<sup>3</sup> which is a sustainable strategy to protect wildlife while also meeting human needs.

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<sup>2</sup> The article appears to have been originally published in Africa Indaba e-Newsletter, Vol3 No. 4, July 2005.

<sup>3</sup> The aim of wildlife tourism is to visit a destination in order to see and gain an understanding of the local fauna without harming the natural environment.

The long-term damage caused by trophy hunting activities outweighs any possible perceived short-term gain and the negative evolutionary effects of trophy hunting on wild populations will deplete populations and will thus threaten the tourism industry. Moreover, trophy hunting is incompatible with South Africa's current attempts to enhance its international image as a destination for ecotourism, with the very animal trophy hunters target as the main attraction.

Ecotourism and trophy hunting are essentially mutually exclusive. Eco-tourists do not want to go to places where wildlife is being killed. Trophy hunting will give South Africa a bad name as an ecotourism destination and is thus likely to reduce earnings from ecotourism.

During the hunting season, which runs from early April to mid-September, wild animals become traumatised, scarce, skittish and dangerous. This has long-term behavioural consequences. Several tourists have been killed by elephants in areas where the animals had been trophy hunted. Rhino are particularly sensitive to the sound of gunshots, which can cause them to run distances of up to 30 kilometres, often leaving their calves struggling to keep up. Wildlife can remain shy throughout the year, especially sensitive animals like elephants. The sound of gunfire and the sight of carcass-laden vehicles can be disconcerting to tourists. Some species may be directly depleted by hunting, while others may move away from an area. The behaviour of wild animals that have experienced hunting pressure makes it very difficult to view them.

Hunting creates little employment in the local area and sustainability is unproven. Even beyond the suffering caused to the animals, trophy hunting potentially deprives the country of far greater revenues that tourists could contribute. The number of eco-tourists far outstrips the number of trophy hunters. Photographic tourists can 'shoot' an animal an unlimited number of times while a hunter can only shoot it once. While the hunting industry chiefly benefits wealthy landowners, ecotourism benefits the economy generally and more jobs are created.

The photographic safari sector is what is giving the tourism industry its primary boost and it should be viewed as the main growth industry for the future. A 2004 study estimated that ecotourism on private game reserves generated more than 15 times the income from cattle farming or wildlife ranching or overseas hunting and created more jobs (Rebecca Sims-Castley, Graham I H Kerley and Beverley Geach, *A Questionnaire -Based Assessment of the Socio-Economic Significance of Ecotourism-Based Private Game Reserves in the Eastern Cape*, University of Port Elizabeth, Terrestrial Ecology Research Unit, November 2004), while an *Africa Geographic* investigation (Ian Michler, 'To Snap or Snipe?', *Africa Geographic*, 2 October 2002) showed that photographic safaris generate more than 12 times as much in staff salaries. In October of 2005 a study on the recreational hunting industry by Patterson and Khosa, was presented to the Panel of Experts on Hunting (set up by the then Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Martinus van Schalkwyk). Their study shows that consumptive uses of game (i.e. recreational trophy hunting) do not necessarily perform better than non-consumptive uses (i.e. eco-tourism).

In general, trophy and recreational hunting practices benefit limited stakeholder group - mostly local and international hunters, captive breeders and their direct employees; the people of a country receive little of the revenues and rural communities typically have limited access to the financial outcomes of this industry. A submission to the Panel of Experts by representatives of communities in

eight provinces stated that trophy hunting is at present an 'old boys club' and that disadvantaged communities do not derive much benefit from it.

By contrast, ecotourism funds are spread throughout the local economies, with hotels, taxis, buses, restaurants, souvenir shops and others benefiting from the greater number of tourists than hunters. In fact, the number of trophy hunters is miniscule in comparison to the number of eco-tourists. In most countries, hunters amount to a few hundred or thousand, versus hundreds of thousands – or even millions - of tourists. Local communities should be given a share of tourist money and park fees should be shared with communities.

The irony of the slaughter of elephants and other large mammals for trophies is that the funds accrued from trophy hunting are miniscule in comparison to the value of these animals as ecotourist draw cards. During the long life of an African elephant, it brings in on-going revenue which is distributed to a wide range of recipients, from airlines to travel companies, and to local economies. In comparison, a trophy-hunted elephant brings a one-time fee. The same is true of other animals.

A 2009 report by Aires Protégées d'Afrique du Centre et de l'Ouest – PAPACO, entitled, *A Grande Chasse En Afrique De L'ouest Quelle Contribution A La Conservation?*, which examined the role of trophy hunting in 28 African countries in relation to conservation, socio-economic and good governance criteria. According to their findings:

1. The economic argument for trophy hunting is inadequate.
2. Trophy hunting is only worth 0.1 US \$ per hectare.
3. Hunting contributions to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and national budgets are insignificant.
4. Economic returns by hectare, for both the private sector and for governments are insufficient.
5. Return for local populations, even when managed by community projects (CBNRM), are insignificant.
6. Poaching and the bushmeat trade are not falling as a result of trophy hunting.
7. The number of salaried jobs in the trophy hunting industry is low considering the population figures and the employment needs.
8. Governance and management is largely absent in most of the countries studied. This serves private interests, but not conservation, States or local communities' interests.
9. Hunting has no social role or benefit and has negative effect as far as development is concerned.
10. Protecting the environment has to be seen as a global good and cannot be used exclusively for private interests or minorities.

It is not hunting areas that will effectively offset prevailing threats to biodiversity but *bona fide* Protected Areas which engage with adjacent areas via ethical non-consumptive photographic and wildlife observation tourism partnerships.

## **‘RECREATIONAL’ OR ‘BILTONG’ HUNTING**

A study entitled, *National Profile and Economic Impact of Biltong Hunters in South Africa* by Dr. P van der Merwe and Prof Dr. M. Saayman, estimated that there are about 200 000 recreational hunters in South Africa and that their total expenditure on hunting trips including fees for the animals hunted is over R4 billion per annum.<sup>4</sup> An earlier study estimated that recreational hunters kill more than a million animals a year.

The study, published in 2008 by the Institute for Tourism and Leisure Studies at the University of the North West, stated that 56% of biltong hunters went on hunting trips three or more times in a year hunters, 78 % travelled in groups of four or more and 65% participated for leisure or to collect meat.

Most participants in biltong hunting are men over the age of 40 who say that part of the attraction is spending time in the bush with friends. They usually go hunting several times a year, often over weekends, and shoot several animals a year. Most hunters keep the meat of antelope, warthogs and birds they shoot, some making biltong and others using the meat for the pot. Some hunters keep the horns and skins of animals as trophies.

Prices vary but hunters pay for accommodation, use of cold rooms and slaughtering facilities. Some hunters purchases packages, which, for example could include one kudu, one impala, one warthog and a wildebeest. Prices fluctuate according to region and time of year but numerous adverts in May 2010 offered kudu from R2 200 – R 3 000, impala from R750 – R900, blue wildebeest from R2 200 and warthog from R700 – R800 and blesbok about R900. Males because they are larger, fetch higher prices than females.

## **THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT’S POSITION**

Trophy hunting has been taking place in South Africa for centuries but it was only in 1981 that the then four provincial nature conservation agencies introduced legislation to control the hunting industry. But this legislation, because of its pro-hunting stance, has neither served the interests of the animals hunted nor controlled and regulated the industry successfully. The nature conservation agencies’ lack of resources, training and personnel and their employees’ openly pro-hunting attitude add to the problem.

Since 1994 the South African Government has vigorously promoted hunting, ostensibly as a means of attracting foreign currency and job creation although the only figures used to justify this stance come from pro-hunting organisations or individuals in educational institutions that are pro-hunting. The government has also stated that it views hunting and associated revenues as a means of assisting in the upliftment of rural communities.

In Mpumalanga, where a number of provincial nature reserves have been the centre of successful land claims, hunting is being promoted as part of the Province “102 Days Quick Wins” programme. These land claims include the Manyeleti Game Reserve which shares an unfenced boundary with the Kruger National Park (hunting was allowed in this reserve in the 1980s and 1990s), and

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<sup>4</sup> According the tourism GDP for South Africa was R45.7 billion in 2005, comprising 3% of the national GDP

Mthethomusha which also shares a boundary (fenced) with the Kruger National Park. Hunting has also taken place in this reserve in the past.

Hunting is promoted both at central and provincial government level. In 2009 during the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs budget speech, Minister Buyelwa Sonjica stated, “The department has noted the important contribution that the hunting industry makes to our GDP. The industry alone injected an estimated income of US\$ 91 212 875 (equivalent of R753million) in the 2006/7 financial year” and that, “this industry, based on the country’s rich fauna, has therefore been identified as providing a potential platform for broadening the participation of local communities in economic activities. Working together with the hunting industry, the department has initiated a process to establish a transformation charter.”

The statistics and figures used by the Minister are the same as those drawn on by the various South African hunting industry associations.

Over and above *Animal Rights Africa’s* opposition to hunting in any form the government’s decision to promote hunting at this stage is problematic because it already fails to properly monitor the industry in its current form. It is extremely difficult to gather accurate hunting figures from Government. This is in part due to the fact that there is no centralized data bank and should the national Department of Water and Environmental Affairs require information they have to contact each province individually and request the information. Some provinces have particularly poor record-keeping systems and fail to provide accurate information on time or at all. In addition, information given to Parliament does not always correspond with other published information or require further explanation to be of value. In some cases the information directly contradicts information from other government bodies.

On 9 July 2009, in response to written questions (Question 5 of 2009) the Department told Parliament it “currently does not have an operational electronic permit system that is linked to the Provincial issuing authorities. Previously such an electronic permit system was not required, as all permits had been issued only by provincial conservation authorities in terms of provincial legislation.” The department added that “Information on transgressions of hunting permit conditions in one province can be provided to the conservation authorities of other provinces, only if the information is requested. Since provincial conservation authorities are not electronically linked to one another, the information is not automatically available.”

It is unclear whether this situation has improved. On 11 February 2010 the Department told Parliament, also in response to written questions, that it has no idea how many lions were hunted in South Africa in 2008 or 2009 and suggested that anyone interested in the figures should contact provincial authorities. Some provincial authorities are notoriously slow in responding to requests for information.

In responses to questions by *Animal Rights Africa*, for example some officials provided inaccurate and incomplete answers even after being pressed for information over a period of 43 days.

For more information see also *Animal Rights Africa* reports:

- *Silences and Spin Doctoring: Access to Information on Elephants in South Africa (October 2008)*  
[www.animalrightsafrica.org/.../Silences\\_and\\_Spin\\_Doctoring\\_an\\_ARA\\_Report\\_Oct\\_2008\\_final.pdf](http://www.animalrightsafrica.org/.../Silences_and_Spin_Doctoring_an_ARA_Report_Oct_2008_final.pdf)
- *Under Siege: Rhinoceroses in South Africa (August 2009)*  
[http://www.animalrightsafrica.org/Archive/ARA\\_Report\\_Under\\_Siege\\_Rhinos\\_in\\_South\\_Africa2009\\_.pdf](http://www.animalrightsafrica.org/Archive/ARA_Report_Under_Siege_Rhinos_in_South_Africa2009_.pdf)

- *Seeking the Path of Least Disclosure: Hunting for Official Answers on Wildlife in South Africa* (January 2010)

[http://www.animalrightsafrica.org/Archive/Hunting\\_for\\_Official\\_Answers\\_on\\_Wildlife\\_in\\_SA.pdf](http://www.animalrightsafrica.org/Archive/Hunting_for_Official_Answers_on_Wildlife_in_SA.pdf)

Decisions on how many and who to kill are often not based on credible and tested ecological data and therefore these decisions are uninformed. Wildlife managers often only use minimum and very basic biological and census information and largely rely on guesstimates provided by non-independent parties such as hunters, safari operators or local communities. Nothing is stopping self-interested contributors falsify population figures so that they can continue to hunt 'excess' animals. Interested parties, such as Safari Club International, sometimes fund research, which can prejudice findings. In a comprehensive summary of over 100 studies of the results of 'sustainable harvest' programmes for the German conservation organisation, Pro Wildlife, Martin Hutter noted that given the costs involved, "it is not surprising, therefore, that monitoring is neglected in many harvesting schemes and projects based on wildlife utilisation." Little wonder that data on population declines are ignored, quotas go unenforced, illegal specimens are laundered through registered programmes, and the promised benefits for local communities and conservation efforts do not materialise. As Valerius Geist has observed, "On land dedicated to a market economy, management will reflect markets, not ecology."

## HUNTING IN AREAS WHICH SHARE UNFENCED BOUNDARIES WITH KRUGER

National Parks are meant to be safe havens for wildlife, not personal playgrounds for the trophy hunting lobby. However, hunting takes place in a number of private and provincial nature reserves (such as the APNR, Mthimkhulu and Makuya) that share unfenced boundaries with the Kruger National Park.

The APNR and provincial nature reserves are often referred to as 'buffer areas' to the Kruger National Park and as being part of the 'Greater Kruger National Park'. The APNR covers an area of some 185 000 hectares.

Minutes of the Joint Management Meeting for Manyeleti and Andover on 24 October 1995, at which two representatives of the Kruger National Park (W Gertenbach and L Van Rooyen) were present, clearly reveal that at the time when decisions were being made about removing fences between the Kruger National Park and some of its neighbours (provincial and private), trophy hunting was an important theme. To quote from the minutes: "KNP would also like to see the fence removed [between Sabi Sand and Manyeleti] on the condition that they have an input in the management decisions of Manyeleti...It was possible that the KNP will make some of their surplus elephants available for Trophy Hunting in the buffer zones if they (KNP) benefit financially as well...Mr Gertenbach said that the National Parks subsidy gets less and less every year, and that they too are looking at means of generating more income. They will not have a problem with hunting in the buffer zones as long as the KNP also derive some sort of benefit from the hunting."

While SANParks has repeatedly denied that the animals hunted are 'Kruger animals' or that hunting operators are benefitting from the strong gene pool protected by the Kruger National Park, hunters themselves boast that the APNR is part of an open ecosystem with the Kruger National Park which allows animal to move freely back and forth from the APNR and provincial reserves. Tourism

operators also advertise that animals move freely between these areas. Research by scientists also shows that bull elephant fitted with satellite tracking collars in the APNR move long distances within the Kruger National Park. This is also the case with Makuya and Mthimkhulu Provincial Nature Reserves. Buffalo, lions and other wild animals also regularly cross the former fence-line.

It is also understood that the Limpopo provincial government is considering reopening hunting at the 42 000 hectare Letaba Ranch, which also shares an open boundary with the Kruger National Park north of Phalaborwa. The reserve has been used as a hunting area in the past.

Hunting has also taken place in the past in the Manyeleti Game Reserve which shares an unfenced boundary with the Kruger National Park and the Mthethomusha Game Reserve which shares a fenced boundary with the Kruger National Park, although the fence is reported to be in a poor state of repair due to theft and damage caused by animals. Both these reserves are run by the Mpumalanga Province which is also considering reopening these areas to hunting as part of its “102 Days Quick Wins” programme. The programme is intended to assist the economic upliftment of local communities and land claimants.

Hunting also takes place on the Kruger National Park’s south-eastern boundary in Mozambique, notably in the Sabie Game Management Area (also known as the Sabie Game Park - SGP).

### **Hunting in the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR)**

The then National Parks Board signed an Agreement with “the various owners of land in the reserves comprising the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR)” on 18 March 1996. In terms of the agreement at the time the APNR consisted of Timbavati, Klaserie and Umbabat private nature reserves. The Agreement stated that “the premise and objective of this agreement is the extension and creation of ecological unity between the APNR adjoining and proximate to the KNP and the KNP itself.” According to the Agreement the “ecological management of the KNP and reserves will be carried out in terms of the principles and policies set out in the management plans” and that a Joint Committee (comprising of 3 members appointed by the Board and three by the APNR) would be established whose function it is to “monitor and implement the Management Plan of the APNR” and “will serve to integrate the management philosophies and principles between the KNP and the APNR...”

In terms of the Agreement “any party can give notice to the other party of its intention to terminate the agreement by giving the other party one years’ written notice.”

According to SANParks the fence between the Kruger National Park and the APNR came down in 1993. This means that the decision was taken just before South Africa became a democracy. The 1996 Agreement did not explicitly address this issue. The Agreement stated that “the premise and objective of this agreement is the extension and creation of ecological unity between the APNR adjoining and proximate to the KNP and the KNP itself”. Commercial trophy hunting was not mentioned.

It is interesting to note that the fences came down more-or-less at the same time as when a letter dated 1 May 1996 written by Kapama Safaris to the warden of Klaserie, pointed out that after extensive flying in search of elephant, there was no success in locating elephant suitable to be

hunted” and at about the same time, renowned elephant expert and conservationist, Ian Douglas-Hamilton, had informed the APNR that there were no ‘trophy elephants’ left in their reserves.<sup>5</sup>

According to SANParks Communications Manager, Wanda Mkutshulwa, quoted in a SAPA news report (14 March 2005), working out how many animals could be hunted was "a joint decision between the private reserves attached to the Kruger National Park and authorities from SA National Parks", where after a permit was needed from the provincial authorities. In a reply to a Parliamentary Question (311, 3 July 2009) the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs said that, “no date has been fixed for review of this agreement. A review will only be done when the need arises.” However, SANParks, in their response to *Animal Rights Africa* at the end of June 2010 replied that this Agreement “is currently being reviewed”.

In the same reply the Minister indicated that SANParks was the state entity which decided on the hunting quotas in these parks.

The history of hunting in these protected areas is contentious and was the subject of a court case in 2005. Hunting has taken place in the area covered by the APNR long before the formation of the private reserves but continued after the formation of Timbavati in 1950. Fences were taken down between the APNR and the Kruger National Park in 1996 but hunting has continued by joint agreement between the APNR and SANParks. The provincial governments (Limpopo and Mpumalanga) merely issue the hunting permits.

The revenue generated through hunting (both trophy and non-trophy) has been substantial, for example, in 2002 60-70 % of Timbavati’s and Klaserie’s management budget was covered by the income derived from hunting. (APNR Scoping Study into the issuing of hunting permits: background information document, September 2002.) It is well known that the majority of landowners in the APNR are wealthy and therefore should be able to afford the levies and costs associated with owning land do not need to be subsidised by any income derived from hunting.

In 2002 one of the owners in the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve and Balulule Nature Reserve, Sybrand van der Spuy, expressed his concern about the hunting activities in these Reserves and requested that a proper objective investigation be carried out. Van der Spuy specifically wanted the issue of hunting in an area contiguous to the Kruger National Park to be investigated, arguing that “proper consideration must be given to the question of whether a limited number of individual landowners should be permitted to hunt a national asset.”<sup>6</sup>

In early 2005, Member of Parliament, Major General (retired) Bantubonke (Bantu) Holomisa, President of the United Democratic Movement (UDM) complained to the Limpopo Provincial government about hunting in the APNR, particularly the Timbavati, saying that animals from the Kruger National Park were being hunted. Holomisa also called on the Minister of Environmental

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<sup>5</sup> 2006 Affidavit by Sybrand van der Spuy in the High Court of South Africa, Transvaal Provincial Division, in the Matter between: Sybrand Van Der Spuy and Bonanza Farm (Pty) Ltd And Associated Private Nature Reserves, Timbavati Private Nature Reserve, Umbabat Private Nature Reserve, Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Balule Nature Reserve, The MEC: Department Of Finance, Economic Development (Limpopo Province), The Minister Of Environmental Affairs And Tourism.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from van der Spuy’s attorneys, Sonnenberg, Hoffmann & Galombik inc. to International Conservation Services, 28 August 2002.

Affairs to place an immediate moratorium on commercial hunting in all the private reserves adjoining the Kruger, pending an independent investigation. Said Holomisa, “surely we cannot condone the destruction of a national asset for the commercial gain of a private institution, and the pleasure of a select group of rich hunters? What is the use of protecting animals in [the] Kruger if they are shot in a neighbouring reserve?” (*Mail & Guardian*, 18 March 2005) The calls by Holomisa prompted the Limpopo province to announce that all hunting permits had been withdrawn but the province later decided to lift the suspension on hunting because the province had already issued permits and the suspension posed some practical problems for overseas hunters.

In 2009 the hunting quota in the APNR had reached an all time high. According to SANParks the four reserves that make up the APNR were granted in consultation with SANParks, the following hunting quotas for 2009 (It is not clear whether all the animals on the quota were shot).

Species	Proposed ‘off-take’
Elephant	55
Buffalo	144
Impala	5003
Zebra	7
Kudu	19
Lion	2
White Rhino	7
Hippo	3
Leopard	1
Waterbuck	4
Warthog	6

Of concern to *Animal Rights Africa* is that the management imperatives between the APNR and a national Protected Area are at odds with one another. If, as stated, the main tenet of the Agreement between SANParks and the APNR, is to extend and create ecological unity between the APNR and the Kruger National Park then surely this would mean that it has to be ‘managed’ according to the principles employed within a National Park and not for commercial hunting purposes. Hunting involves the replacement of natural forces of population dynamics with a set of artificially established and enforced targets concerning the number of trophy animals, reproduction rates, sex and age-ratio and species diversity.

Furthermore, due to the removal of the boundary fence with the Kruger National Park the APNR acts as a ‘sink’ for Kruger animals and attracts a range of highly-valued species (by the hunting fraternity) moving in unknown numbers from the Kruger Park. This type of wildlife ‘management’ consciously denies the major role of reproduction surpluses in the process of evolution and contributes substantially to the suppression of natural selection as a dynamic process of wildlife ecology and evolution. Trophy and recreational hunting does in no way resemble ‘opportunistic’ hunting by natural predation (taking off the weakest and / or most unfit individuals of a population). To the contrary, trophy hunting usually targets one gender (males) and specific age classes – those individuals that bear the longest or thickest horns, the biggest tusks, the biggest manes etc. Thus, trophy hunting often triggers skewed sex-ratios and age-structures, disturbs reproductive patterns, or increases the abundance of abnormal features such as infanticide.

### *The Movement of Wild Animals between the APNR and the Kruger National Park*

SANParks has a mandate to preserve the biodiversity of the Kruger National Park, and other national parks, on behalf of the citizens of the country. The wildlife, and indeed the many components of life that make up the biodiversity of the Kruger National Park, are regarded as 'national assets'.

Tourists visiting the Kruger National Park are told that no hunting takes place in the park. Most private lodges in the APNR also decline to tell guests about hunting.

So skittish are the tourist operators in the APNR about talking about hunting, that in 2006, when a very well known lion - known to guides as one of the 'Sohebele brothers' - was shot and wounded by a hunter within hearing distance of a tourist lodge, although privately angry, they merely noted in their online newsletters that one of the brothers had 'disappeared'. One lodge newsletter writer (the head ranger), although knowing full well that lodge managers had already written private letters of complaint to the management of the APNR about the hunting of the lion, went so far as to claim that the lion may have been killed in a territorial fight.

The questions that are raised are:

1. Does the hunting occur with the support, knowledge or agreement of SANParks?
2. Are the animals that are killed the same as those seen by tourists in the Kruger National Park (animals that tourists believe to be protected in terms of legislation).

An elephant photographed by tourists in the park could well be killed by trophy hunters later, a fact that would disillusion many visitors and South Africans.

SANParks and the APNR have regularly rejected claims that animals from the Kruger National Park, particularly elephants, are killed by hunters in these private reserves. They have, until recently, claimed that there is no movement between the two areas despite well documented satellite tracking records by scientists from the Save the Elephants Foundation working in the APNR. Their research shows that bull elephants regularly move between the Kruger National Park and APNR.<sup>7</sup> One elephant, known as Mac, moves between the APNR and Shingwedzi in the Kruger National Park, and another elephant moved from the APNR to the Kruger National Park's southern boundary on the Crocodile River. (See Annexure 4)

Responding to media articles and previous criticism from *Animal Rights Africa* and the *International Fund for Animal Welfare* about the hunting of animals in the APNR, Dr David Mabunda, Chief Executive Officer of SANParks said in a written response posted on the SANParks website (and also published in some media) that, "As to the wild claims that the animals being hunted in these buffer areas are those belonging to national parks, wildlife is declared *res nullius* (nobody's property) and as such, one cannot speculate on this matter...Animals are territorial by nature and are not prone to wander unless under extreme circumstances. The likelihood of these being national parks animals is minimal...Most of the animals in the private reserves were part of these reserves before the fences were removed. The only effect of removing the fences was to create more land for the animals." Dr Mabunda added that "As long as the sanctity of national parks is maintained according to the laws of the country, SANParks cannot dictate or control the activities of its neighbours."

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<sup>7</sup> 'Population dynamic and elephant movements within the Associated Private Nature Reserves and adjoining Kruger National Park', Progress Report November 2003

It is unclear how removing the fence would “create more land for the animals” if they do not cross from the APNR into Kruger National Park or vice versa. Dr Mabunda’s statement that animals are “not prone to wander” and that animals are not moving into the APNR, was directly contradicted in writing to *Animal Rights Africa* by SANParks’ Dr Hector Magome, Managing Executive: Conservation Services, on 30 June 2010. He stated that “Indeed, animals do move freely between the KNP and the APNR”. He also agreed that animals regularly move between the KNP and Mkuya and Mthimkhulu nature reserves.

### ***The Views of Some Hunters and Tourist Operators in the APNR***

Extensive reading of hunting and tourism websites, discussions with hunters and other research shows that hunting outfitters and tourism lodges working in the APNR do not share SANParks’ view about the movement of wildlife in the area. They instead promote the fact that wildlife moves between the areas.

The Internet is littered with accounts which clearly show that animals which are supposedly afforded protection provided by the Kruger National Park are indeed hunted and shot for commercial gain. This constitutes a violation of the sanctity of the Kruger National Park.

Below are examples of such accounts:

An advertisement on Africa Hunting.com announced an elephant bull from the Klaserie Game Reserve for trophy hunting through Xomauqa Safaris: See Annexure 5 ([www.africahunting.com/great-deals-hunts-worldwide/933-klaserie-game-reserve-elephant-hunt.html](http://www.africahunting.com/great-deals-hunts-worldwide/933-klaserie-game-reserve-elephant-hunt.html))

Thormahlen and Cochrane, a South African safari operator which is well known and respected within the international hunting community uses the Timbavati (APNR) as one of its hunting areas. They note on their website ([www.africantrophyhunting.com](http://www.africantrophyhunting.com)) that the Timbavati is “alongside the western middle part of the Kruger National Park. There are no fences and huge buffalo herds roam freely within the two areas. Buffalo are not the only animals in the Timbavati - during the hunt you will come across free roaming lions, cheetahs, rhinos, elephants and other game.” Their website has photographs of several elephants hunted in the Timbavati.

An advertisement posted on the popular hunting forum Hunt Network ([www.huntnetwork.net](http://www.huntnetwork.net)) in June 2010 also stresses the point that wild animals move from the Kruger National Park into the APNR and that this improves the choice of trophy animals. “Elephant Hunt - 2010 Special. We received more elephant bulls on quota in the APNR. The APNR are private reserves –Umbabat / Klaserie / Timbavati / Balule, which borders Kruger National Park with no fence between Kruger and these reserves. The western boundary of the APNR fence is the western boundary of Greater Kruger.” The advertisement also lists prices: “ 12 day elephant safari (10 hunting days): Cost all inclusive for one hunter is US\$49,500/ Euro 34,8500 for ivory up to 59.5 pounds on the heaviest tusk (A refund of US\$10,000 if elephant not successfully hunted). Ivory in excess of 59.5 lbs: additional fee of \$5000/Euro 3500 for every 10 lbs.” The advert also suggest that certain months are better for trophy elephants – a clear reference to animals moving in and out of the APNR- “Best months for the big bulls is July Aug., Sept., Oct. and November.”

Another advertisement also on the [www.huntnetwork.net](http://www.huntnetwork.net) website in June 2010 offers a “Big Five Hunting Safari” in the “Greater Kruger Reserve Concession” which forms part of the “Greater Kruger

Park”. “Elephant – up to 70lbs bull can be hunted, White rhinos – no limitation on horn size, Cape Buffalo – no limitation on trophy size, Lion – no limitation on mane size, Leopard – are is well known for huge tom cats. It is a 100% free range hunt. Safari cost: trophy fee total US\$262,200.”



Thormahlen & Cochran Safaris. 185pound male leopard hunted in Timbavati. Source: [www.africatrophyhunting.com/TrophyRoom.asp?sf=8&PageStack=%2FTrophies%2Easp%3Fsf%3D8&Id=53](http://www.africatrophyhunting.com/TrophyRoom.asp?sf=8&PageStack=%2FTrophies%2Easp%3Fsf%3D8&Id=53)

The fact that animals move in and out of the APNR is also supported by tourist operators and park rangers. Kings Camp, a luxury lodge in the Timbavati, note on their website that: “In the early 1990’s the boundary fence between the Kruger National Park and adjacent private game reserves, namely Timbavati, Sabie Sands, Klaserie, Umbabat and Manyaleti was removed to create the greater Kruger National Park, covering an area of 2.2 million hectares. The reason being conservationists wanted to re-create ancient migration movements of wildlife from the foothills of the Lebombo Mountains in the east, to the Drakensburg Mountains in the west.”

In a newsletter sent out in September 2009 by the Manager of the Ingwelala Shareblock to other members of the Umbabat Private Game Reserve the (warden) manager noted that “...below are the recent game census figures for 2009 in comparison with recent years. Because the Umbabat is part of an open (unfenced) ecological system, the movement of game is uninhibited over a vast area. Be circumspect therefore when deliberating and speculating on any population trends. There may be many unknown and uncertain contributing factors to fluctuating numbers.”

In another example, the park ranger, writing in the Motswari (Timbavati) November/December 2009 ‘game’ sightings newsletter, noted that, “....then, just as we were losing hope, Godfrey picked up tracks for a pride of lions coming in from the Kruger Park in the east, and we put a whole tracking

team on them, and by the end of the morning the guests were sitting watching five lions with two buffalo kills in our remote eastern property.”

Wounded elephants have even fled into the Kruger National Park from the APNR. This internal e-mail, sent to APNR members on 6 April 2006 notified them that management; “... Wishes to inform the broader community that during an elephant hunt on the 24<sup>th</sup> March a large one tusk bull was wounded and moved into the Kruger National Park.” “The writer noted that “In accordance with the hunting protocol the relevant authorities were informed and a follow up took place but the animal has not been found...permission has also been received to extend the new search into the Kruger National Park.”

All the examples quoted above, and there are many others, directly contradict SANParks’ claims and also the statement made in an APNR memorandum about hunting sent to the then Minister of Environmental Affairs on 18 July 2005 from Timbavati which stated that, “There are no large mammal migrations between the Kruger National Park and the APNR,” although it does not differentiate between true “migration” – the periodic movements of animals in response to seasonal changes or reproductive instinct - and a bull elephant merely moving through its territory or home range, which in the cases of some tracked elephants, includes both areas.

Dr Mabunda himself recently seems to have rethought his views on whether or not animals hunted in the APNR are national assets and should be allowed when he told the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee in March 2010 that the original contracts regarding hunting had been drawn up a long time ago and the matter should be reviewed and hunting stopped because it involved “national assets”. Dr Mabunda also told the Committee that privately-owned reserves sharing borders with National Parks had been in existence for 25 years and the policy at the time did not provide for “the kinds of checks and balances that the Member [of Parliament] was requesting...It simply allowed removal of fences and movements of animals across boundaries. Some of the lodges, such as Timbavati and Balule in the North, had hunting permits issued by Limpopo Provincial Government.”

Dr Mabunda went on to say, “Some of the lodges, such as Timbavati and Balule in the North, had hunting permits issued by Limpopo Provincial Government. There had been a public outcry and a court case ruled in the favour of the hunting lodges, due to lack of information at the time [2005], however, since National assets were involved, the view of SANParks was that this was a matter of national concern, and that the Committee should institute a process to amend legislation to prohibit hunting where contractual parks were linked to a National Park.”

Asked by *Animal Rights Africa* for clarity on the issue, SANParks’ Dr Hector Magome, replied that he did not know if hunting would be stopped in provincial and private reserves because “as explained by Dr Mabunda to the Portfolio Committee, this is a policy decision of the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). As such SANParks cannot determine timeframe, if such a decision will be taken”? He added that “the DEA will decide to whom this will apply, if it will be enacted or regulated”.

In the light of these comments (the proceeding of Portfolio Committee meetings are recorded and minutes later published the Parliamentary Monitoring Group) it appears that SANParks would like to stop hunting in the private and provincial nature reserves that share unfenced boundaries with the Kruger National Park but believe they have no say in the matter because it is for the Minister and the Department to decide.

### ***Res Nullius vs. Res Publicae***

Clearly, wildlife moves freely between the Kruger National Park and the private and provincial reserves that share unfenced borders with the park. Hunters and tourist operator boast that this improves ‘game’ viewing; improves the size of trophy animals that can be shot; and that they are part of the greater Kruger National Park protected area. The hunters say that Kruger National Park acts as an invaluable gene pool for them. In effect hunting operators are profiting by killing animal protected by SANParks on behalf of South African citizens.

Over and above our repudiation of all hunting, *Animal Rights Africa* believes that the wild animals that move across the border from the Kruger National Park into private and provincial reserves are not *res nullius* at all and that these animals deserve the same protection as they do in the Park where they spend much of their lives. Moreover, SANParks, through its participation in the joint management committees, still controls the fate of these animals. *Animal Rights Africa* is of the firm opinion that SANParks should be at the forefront of having the problematic, outdated and contested notion of wild animals being *res nullius* (i.e. that they are ownerless and can be freely exploited) legally replaced with the concept of wild animals as *res publicae* (in public ownership). Removal of fences between national parks and private or communal land does not mean that the State has “lost” ownership or that the wild animals are now “ownerless”, particularly given the Agreement signed between SANParks and the APNR which makes policy and management decisions a joint responsibility (SANParks has therefore not lost ownership at all). This also applies to animals that leave Protected Areas through gaps in poorly maintained fences.

Allowing trophy hunters to kill wildlife from the Kruger National Park under the guise of ‘*res nullius*’ not only eviscerates the ban on trophy hunting in national protected areas, but also sets a troubling precedent that could be expanded to the entire national park system.

*Res nullius* has no place in South Africa – it was first proposed as a political justification for white ownership of land in the Cape in the 1830s and is closely linked to colonial and imperial notions of possession and ownership. It is in conflict with the South African Constitution and is no longer justifiable in our democratic society.

If the South African Government approves of the hunting of animals that cross from the Kruger National Park, into provincial and private reserves they should proudly announce this publicly – in other words Government must tell South Africa and the world that they do not mind if protected ‘national assets’ are killed for the enrichment of a few hunting outfitters and the recreation and entertainment of a handful of rich foreigners.

### **Hunting in Provincial Parks that Share Unfenced Boundaries with the Kruger National Park**

Hunting takes place in Makuya Nature Reserve (Limpopo) near the Pafuri Gate entrance to the Kruger National Park and Mthimkhulu Nature Reserve (north of the Letaba River). A further hunting concession is being considered in an area known as Marieta Park which runs north of the Klein Letaba River to an area south of Phalaborwa. This area falls outside the existing boundary of the Kruger National Park and the possibility of moving the fence has been discussed a number of times by SANParks, community leaders and officials from the Department of Agriculture. The possibility that trophy hunting could be undertaken in this area is detailed in the Kruger National Park

Management plan published in 2008. Both Makuya and Mthimkhulu have been subjected to successful land claims and are managed by the local traditional leadership in conjunction with provincial authorities and SANParks.

As with the debate over animals hunted in the APNR it is clear from hunters' reports and those from staff interviewed in the parks, that wildlife crosses freely from one area to the other. As with the APNR, collared elephants have been tracked moving in and out of the Kruger National Park. Wildlife that strays from the Kruger National Park into these reserve risks being shot. Despite this SANParks denies that any of the animals that fall under their custody are hunted. Although SANParks has assisted in allocating hunting quotas for both these nature reserves the organisation says it has no signed agreements as to what take place in these reserves.

Despite Dr Magome, conceding that animals from the Kruger National Park cross into these parks all the time, peculiarly SANParks argues that, that questions relating to hunting in them can only be answered by the provincial authorities. "In fact, hunting is a legal activity in South Africa, and is governed by relevant laws and policies. To the extent that this is the case, SANParks is not allowed by law (Chapter 3 of the Constitution) to assume functions that are not assigned to it by its act. Therefore, SANParks cannot comment on behalf of provincial parks (Limpopo and Mpumalanga) because SANParks does not have authority to do so," Dr Magome said.

Why SANParks appears to be refusing to accept some accountability for what happens in these two nature reserves when it meets regularly with provincial managers is not clear, particularly in the light of the serious misgivings about provincial management ability expressed in the latest Kruger National Park Management Plan (2008): "A draw-back to the progression of finalizing formalized buffer area arrangements are the sometimes strained relationships between SANParks and some of the provincial authorities. This is primarily as a result of lack of capacity on the part of provincial authorities to manage and control these areas adequately, resulting in serious poaching, harvesting of firewood, and even the establishment of mining infrastructure in Makuya Nature Reserve. However, it is KNP's aim to continue to engage and assist the provincial conservation authorities to build the necessary capacity in order to manage these areas appropriately. Once the co-management agreements have been signed there would be some processes that all parties have to follow in order to achieve the set goals."

And in contradiction to SANParks reply to *Animal Rights Africa* in June 2010 that questions relating to hunting in these parks can only be answered by the provincial authorities, in 2009 SANParks provided newspaper reporters with a summary of the proposed hunting 'off-take' by Mthimkhulu Nature Reserve for the 2008/2009 period. See below.

Species	Proposed 'off-take'
Elephant	10
Buffalo	20
Zebra	0
Impala	18
Hippo	6
Kudu	4
Nyala	2
Waterbuck	3

Summary of proposed hunting ‘off-take’ by Makuya Nature Reserve for the 2008 / 2009 period:

Species	Quota allocated
Elephant	5
Buffalo	10
Impala	20
Kudu	5

### Are animals from the Kruger National Park hunted in Makuya and Mthimkhulu?

SANParks says that it is unlikely that any animals from the Kruger National Park are hunted in these two provincial reserves but hunters regularly boast that they are taking full advantage of the strong ‘Kruger genetics’ and state that animals cross into the hunting areas all the time. The hunting operator that holds the concession for the 16 000 hectare Makuya Nature Reserve even states that they have an undertaking with SANParks in which they agree not to shoot any elephants **collared** for research purposes in the Kruger National Park and which may move into the provincial reserve.

As noted earlier in this Report, SANParks are on record as saying that the claims that animals being hunted in these buffer areas are those belonging to national parks are “wild” (i.e. outrageous and untrue) and that the likelihood of these being national parks’ animals is “minimal”. The hunting operators and hunters who visit Makuya and Mthimkhulu to kill elephants, buffalo, nyala, waterbuck, impala and other species are in no doubt that some of the animals they shoot, particularly elephants and buffalo, are from the Kruger National Park.

The Danish company called Limpopo Travel ([www.limpopotravel.dk](http://www.limpopotravel.dk)) which holds the hunting concession in Makuya is careful to stress which Kruger elephants may be killed. *“A number of elephant research projects are being carried out in Kruger Park that involves fitting a collar on a small number of elephants. Should any of these elephant be seen in Makuya reserve, they are of course protected”* their website says. *“In order to protect the few world famous +100 pounders from the Kruger, who are a huge attraction for the photographic tourists we have agreed with Kruger Park that those elephants are protected. We have therefore put a maximum trophy size of 70 pounds in Makuya.”*

SANParks denies that it has any Agreement with this company but says that an agreement has been drawn up between Limpopo Travel and Limpopo provincial authorities. Either way, surely SANParks is aware that this company is likely to be shooting animals that cross from the Kruger National Park?

When hunting reopened in Makuya in 2008 (it was last legally used by hunters in 1996) an article posted on the US based hunting website Hunting Report ([www.huntingreport.com](http://www.huntingreport.com)) noted that: *“A truly new and exciting hunt has emerged in South Africa where the Makuya tribe is allowing hunts for lion, leopard, elephant and buffalo,”* the writer enthused. *“The area in question is immediately adjacent to Kruger National Park. No fence separates the hunting area from Kruger Park, only the Luvuvhu River, which animals can cross easily.”*

For examples of satellite tracking of elephants going into Makuya in 2010 see **Annexure 5** - <http://www.wildernesstrust.com/download/509025/Makuleke%20Elephant%20Movements%20-%20May%202010.pdf> (Save The Elephants Transboundary Elephant Research Programme)

Videos of buffalo hunting in Makuya can be viewed on YouTube at:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPssS4yPZXo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPssS4yPZXo) and [www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2HACa\\_RmGI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2HACa_RmGI)

The Luvuvhu River which forms the unfenced border with the Kruger National Park can clearly be seen in the videos. *Animal Rights Africa* researchers have watched elephant and buffalo crossing the Luvuvhu River which forms the border between Makuya and the Kruger National Park on a number of occasions and according to Makuya staff, these two species move between the areas “all the time”. Staff in Makuya also report that lions move in and out of the provincial park from Kruger National Park regularly.

A similar situation exists in the Mthimkhulu Nature Reserve which borders on the Kruger National Park and Letaba Ranch.

Mthimkhulu also opened to hunting in 2008 and since then a number of articles have been published encouraging other hunters to visit the area because animals move in and out of Kruger National Park regularly. According to one hunter “...the Kruger Park genetics are some of the best I have ever seen.” One of the first foreign hunters to hunt in Mthimkhulu wrote of his experiences in the United States based *The Hunting Report* and encouraged others to visit the new concession. “Up until a few years ago the border fence of Kruger National Park was situated on Letaba’s eastern boundary. It was then moved to the ranch’s western boundary, which means you’ll be hunting the tremendous gene pools of Kruger National Park for buffalo, elephant and hippo”, he wrote. “I took the day yesterday to go scout and see the place. It is like a dream for me to even think of the opportunity to hunt a piece of the more than 7 million acres of Kruger Park wilderness [*sic: Kruger is some 4.6 million hectares in extent*] where elephants, lion and leopard are as wild as it has been forever. It is amazing!!!! The Kruger Park genetics are some of the best I have ever seen. They have seen several bulls in the 45-inch -plus range late.” A little later in his article he notes that “...continuing on we found fresh buffalo spoor only a short distance down the road and followed it up. After about an hour we caught up to them. They had done a full 180 degrees and were halfway across the river going back into Kruger Park.” On his final morning, eager to shoot another buffalo, he records that “As we were close to the river, we had also agreed that Johan (the South African professional hunter) would follow up my first shot without hesitating. The thought of a wounded buffalo crossing into Kruger Park was not even worth considering and a chance we would not take.”<sup>8</sup> (See **Annexure 6**). From this account it is clear that this hunter is at all times accompanied by the South African professional hunter who knows the region very well and would have been the source of most of this hunter’s knowledge of Mthimkhulu. There is never any doubt during the narrative that, in this instance buffalo, which spend some, or most of their lives in the Kruger National Park are shot in Mthimkhulu. (For more examples see also **Annexure 7** - <http://forums accuratereloading.com/eve/forums/a/tpc/f/6321043/m/9751037411>)

Hunting continues in the area and buffalo and elephant that stray along the banks of the Letaba River out of Kruger National Park into the Mthimkhulu hunting area risk being killed. A tourist

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<sup>8</sup> [www.huntingreport.com/temp\\_Mousso%20\\_Buffel\\_Old\\_Buffalo\\_In\\_Mthimkhulu\\_Reserve\\_11\\_28\\_2008.cfm](http://www.huntingreport.com/temp_Mousso%20_Buffel_Old_Buffalo_In_Mthimkhulu_Reserve_11_28_2008.cfm)

company operator visiting the area in April 2010 reported that a large bull elephant that seemed calm around humans was shot six or seven times by a hunter before it died.

*Animal Rights Africa* researchers have physically watched elephant, buffalo, hippo and nyala moving freely across the river into the hunting area. Some of the hunting area is overlooked by a failed luxury bush-house development which was the subject of a protracted dispute between the developers and the provincial Government. The development remains abandoned.

### **Makuleke Contract Park**

Hunting was also permitted in a contract park run by the Makuleke community who won a land claim in the 19 842 hectare “Pafuri Triangle” which runs from the Limpopo to the Luvuvhu River along the north eastern border of the Kruger National Park. Hunting commenced in 2000 and two elephants and two buffalo were killed by foreign hunters. The quota had increased to five elephants and seven buffalo by 2003 but hunting was discontinued in favour of non consumptive tourism.

It is understood that the community have met with authorities to discuss the possibility of reopening hunting in the contract park.

### **Marieta Park**

A further hunting concession on the boundary of the Kruger National Park is being considered in an area known as Marieta Park, which runs north of the Klein Letaba River to an area south of Phalaborwa. This area falls outside the existing boundary of Kruger National Park and is north of the Mthimkhulu Nature Reserve. Although the possibility of moving the existing fence to allow trophy hunting has been discussed a number of times by SANParks, community leaders and Department of Agriculture officials, SANParks has denied that this has taken place. The land in question belongs to several communities, not all of whom support hunting, and the current boundary fence of the Kruger National Park will have to be moved to the west if hunting is to be allowed. Animals from Kruger National Park would have to repopulate the area.

In July 2009 *the Sunday Independent* reported that SANParks “is planning to move a 48km section of the world renowned Kruger National Park’s western boundary fence to create a new 150km contracting park specifically to allow trophy hunting.” This article elicited a furious response from SANParks on 14 July 2009, denying that any hunting was taking place saying that “The claims that SANParks has given concessions for hunting to contractual parks come as news to us, because we do not know of any such decision. We invite anyone who has such documented decisions to bring them to our attention.” SANParks failed to note that the story said only that trophy hunting in the area was “planned” and that the Managing Executive: Conservation Services at SANParks, Dr Hector Magome, confirmed to the newspaper that hunting had been considered and was the most economically viable use of the land.

According to the article, “Responding in writing to questions submitted by *The Sunday Independent*, Dr Hector Magome, Managing Executive of Conservation Services at SANParks, said that permitting hunting in provincial, private or contract parks that share unfenced boundaries with Kruger falls within the concept of sustainable use of natural resources and was permissible in terms of the

Protected Areas Act and the Kruger Management Plan. “This area has a low tourism or agricultural potential” Magome said. “Sustainable use of resources is currently the best option as it benefits communities most and has the lowest impact on the environment.” Although there is very little wildlife in the area, he said “(wild) animals will re-colonise the area over time as their populations grow.”

The only source for this “recolonisation” is the Kruger National Park.

Given SANParks’ vehement denial that any plans for trophy hunting in the area exists, it is surprising that the *Sunday Independent’s* claim is also confirmed in SANParks’ own Kruger National Park Management plan updated in December 2008 (available on the SANParks website ([www.sanparks.org](http://www.sanparks.org)) which states: “Certain communities that occupy land adjacent to the Kruger National Park (currently belonging to the Department of Land Affairs but under claim or utilised by communities) have expressed the desire that parts of their land be included into the Kruger National Park as natural resource use and ecotourism zones.” The plan states: “Areas earmarked in this category include Mjejane and Mthimkhulu (fences removed but no final agreements concluded – Mthimkhulu still managed by LEDET), Mahumani, Ndindani, Mahlathi, Muyexe and Mhinga (still not formally included and fences still intact – formerly referred to as Mariyeta Buffer Area). The relevant chiefs of these areas have already showed interest to proclaim and incorporate these areas into Kruger National Park as protected environment or contractual national park land that will then be managed by the Kruger National Park. *It is envisaged that sustainable resource use within these areas will be conducted under controlled conditions that will be captured in the agreements with these areas. Significant income can be generated from trophy hunting while utilisation of renewable resources such as meat, mopane worms and thatch will be able to be sourced at sustainable levels, thus allowing the communities access to food sources as well as to earn an income (e.g. from trophy hunting, ecotourism ventures.*” [ARA italics]

It is clear from the above that hunting is indeed being considered as an option in this area and, if allowed, will bring further pressure to bear on animals living in the Kruger National Park within vicinity of the border fence.

It is also interesting to note that the Management Plan, updated in December 2008, notes that while no final agreements had been reached in the Mthimkhulu area hunting had already begun in September 2008.

### **Sabie Game Management Area/Sabie Game Park (Mozambique)**

This hunting area shares a 40 kilometre boundary on the south eastern edge of Kruger National Park and lies within Mozambique. Lions, elephants, buffaloes, hippos and other wild animals are hunted.

The SANParks online forum, which is used primarily by supporters of SANParks and particularly the Kruger National Park, has been the site of a furious 18 month long argument over hunting in Sabie Game Park (SGP). Some have expressed concern that hunters in this area are also hunting “Kruger” animals and that SANParks are being negligent in not repairing fences in the area (fences are regularly stolen or damaged by floods or wildlife) or monitoring issues more closely. Some users, who together have visited Kruger National Park hundreds of times and are loyal fans of the Kruger National Park, have struggled to get answers on the issue since at least November 2008. SANParks

attempted to provide some answers early in December 2008 and again in February 2009 but these sparked further debate which became increasingly critical of the SGP and SANParks itself. Some users accused SANParks of being unwilling to provide clear answers or to engage in open debate.

SANParks later resorted to removing at least one post and reprimanded users for criticising SANParks 'stakeholders (in this instance SGP). SANParks said that the threat of legal action by SGP had prompted them to do this.

Allegations that animals from the Kruger National Park have been hunted in the SGP have also been published elsewhere and in February 2010 the *Lowvelder* newspaper in Nelspruit ran an article questioning the number of leopards and other big game hunted in the area and pointing out that some people believed that animals from the Kruger National Park were being hunted.

Dr Freek Venter, the Head: Conservation Services Kruger National Park said in a statement posted on the forum in February 2009 that it was impossible to say whether animals from the Kruger National Park were being hunted in the SGP. He added that that one of the goals of transboundary conservation was to uplift local communities in countries like Mozambique and that "there is much evidence to suggest that hunting is more successful than ecotourism in reaching this goal".

A statement from SGP conveyed via SANParks management said "A Game Census in 1999 revealed there was no wildlife resident on Sabie," but added "Animals have re-inhabited the property (and continue doing so) by moving through what remains of the Kruger Park fence, along its entire 40 kilometre length, and have become resident, and are breeding on SGP."

The difficulty in getting clear answers, or any regular responses from SANParks caused a great deal of frustration and disappointment amongst some members of the forum throughout the debate.

"Surely this is serious enough for SANPARKS to give a quick response and possibly a follow up later, and then regular progress reports," correspondent 'gmIsmit', whose signature notes that he/she has experienced "125 wonderful visits" [to the Kruger National Park]. "At this stage very little is more important than the safety and security of OUR ANIMALS. Put out the fire while it still is a flickering flame - not when it is a blazing inferno. Please let us all for a change join forces and nip this in the bud and stop this LEGALISED POACHING of OUR ANIMALS". [Capital letters used as published on the forum].

Criticism of hunting in SGP increased over the next year and SGPs' management threatened to take legal action to defend their name. The General Manager of Media & Stakeholder Relations, Reynold Thakhuli, entered the fray on 24 February 2010, warning contributors that "Irresponsible and unsubstantiated comments on this forum, especially about our stakeholders have a potential of damaging our international standing of good practices. We have a responsibility as an organisation to ensure that our partnerships are nurtured and protected at all times."

Thakhuli said that SANParks "thanks Sabie Game Park for raising their concern about the abuse on this forum by forumites even after Kruger National Park had provided facts on the issue" and he added that "We also extend a sincere apology to Sabie Game Park for the damage caused by the irresponsible insinuations and accusations that were expressed publicly on this platform."

Some members were dismayed at SANParks' defence of hunting in SGP, and 'Jumbo' wrote on 24 February 2010, "This thread has been running a very long time. From the beginning people expressed their fears of what is going on in Sabie...the responses from SANParks were very vague, to say the least. Would it at all have helped if we brought this to you in private?"

"Apart from this, and as I mentioned before, the forum is a group of people working together, towards what they believe, might be for the better of these parks. In this thread, people worked together to gain additional facts...it wasn't mud-slinging...it was working together trying to find out what exactly is going on and what threat does this hold for our wildlife," 'Jumbo' said. SANParks however kept quiet...and this threat is a very good example of why there needs to be more participation from SANPark's side."

Hunting continues in SGP and SANParks have remained silent on the forum since Thakhuli's posting on 24 February 2010.

## HUNTING IN PROVINCIAL PARKS

Hunting is permitted in a number of provincial nature reserves over and above the reserves mentioned above. Authorities are careful not to attract too much attention to the fact that animals are hunted in nature reserves because of the reaction it would draw from tourists although it is well known amongst the hunting fraternity.

The authorities argue that allowing hunting in nature reserves is in line with the concept of sustainable utilisation of natural resources but critics point out that the purpose of protected areas is to enhance biodiversity by protecting animals and plants. The authorities also argue that allowing hunting helps bring in much needed revenue.

In some provinces, notably the Eastern Cape, tenders are published encouraging private companies to tender for hunting under the pretext of "game off-take packages". Hunting takes place, or has taken place in recent years in, amongst others, the following reserves:

- Free State: Willem Pretorius, Tussen die Riviere
- Mpumalanga: Loskop Dam, Songimvelo, Ohrigstad, Blyde Rivier, SS Skosana
- Limpopo: Atherstone, Makuya, Mthimkhulu
- North West: Botsalano, Molopo, Borakalalo
- KwaZulu Natal: Mkuze
- Eastern Cape: Dwesa, Ovistone, Mpofu, Tsolwana.

Trophy hunting was permitted in the Pilanesberg National Park and Madikwe Game Reserve (both run by North West province) but apparently they are re-evaluating this decision.

## LAND CLAIMS AND HUNTING

Most protected areas are the subject of land claims by communities who were dispossessed of their property during the apartheid era. Many parts of the Kruger National Park and nearly all other major game and nature reserves have had one or more claims lodged against portions, or all of, the

protected areas. Some claims have been successful and co-management agreements have been drawn up between local communities and conservation authorities.

Some communities see trophy hunting as a quick source of relatively large amounts of money and have thus offered professional hunting outfitters annual hunting packages. Revenue is divided between local communities and the hunting outfitter. It is not clear how many of these agreements have been audited.

Makuya and Mthimkhulu Nature Reserve were successfully claimed and, as explained above, trophy hunting takes place in both Reserves.

In Mpumalanga, the Mayeleti, Mthethomusha, Songimvelo and Loskop Nature Reserves have all been successfully claimed. Hunting already takes place in Loskop and Songimvelo and the possibility of restarting hunting in the other two reserves is being considered. A similar situation exists in many other nature reserves across the country and various options are being discussed by conservation authorities and local communities.

Government considers trophy hunting as one of a number natural resource use options which can be used to assist in the economic upliftment of poor rural communities who were deprived of their land during the apartheid era.

## HUNTING OF LIONS

“To them it’s just a trophy, so whether they shoot it in a cage or off the back of a truck, it’s just a trophy. I think it’s a sickness, like a collector. Once you start collecting stamps, you know, you get into this sort of frenzy. You just want to collect the stamps and you’ll go to any lengths to get a special stamp.”

*Lion breeder, Gerald Glas, quoted in Carte Blanche programme, 24 March 2002.*

Canned hunting is the ‘put and take’ practice of offering a captive, and often tame, animal, which usually has nowhere to run, commonly to a rich overseas trophy hunter who wants to mount its head on a wall. The animals used for canned hunts in South Africa include indigenous and exotic cats (such as Bengal tigers and jaguars). Appetite for profit seems to propel this industry and it fits comfortably within the current South African wildlife management system of sustainable use, which is based on attaching an economic value to a sentient being. As in the commercial farming of domestic animals, birth rates are maximised at the lowest costs possible. In order to increase production of lions, an extra oestrus cycle is induced, as with farm animals, and the cubs are removed from their mothers and hand-reared in small cages. Male lions are sought-after trophies, and as a consequence are more profitable. Most of the female cubs are therefore killed.

The hunting of captive raised lions in South Africa, although an activity that had been taking place for decades, first drew international attention after the release of the Cook Report in 1997, which exposed canned lion practices in South Africa. As a consequence there was huge public outcry about canned hunting and its damaging ethical, ecological and biological implications. Public opinion favours an outright ban of this industry.



Source: [/www.tamsafaris.com/trophies\\_.htm#](http://www.tamsafaris.com/trophies_.htm#)

Since 1997 no fewer than three Ministers of the Environment (the Department has undergone name changes over the years) undertook to investigate the industry and close it down. By 2005 the then Minister, Martinus Van Schalkwyk, could no longer ignore the weight of public opinion and the real threat this industry poses to the South African tourism industry. Despite this, officials in Pretoria and most provinces did nothing to close the industry until 2006 when new legislation was drafted with the intention of making it compulsory for captive raised lions to be allowed to freely range in relatively large areas for two years before being hunted.

With all the duplicity, fanfare and spin put out by the Ministry of Environment over the past few years, the general public, both locally and internationally, cannot be criticised for thinking that canned hunting in South African is a thing of the past. But nothing can be further from the truth. Far from being controlled, the canned hunting industry, with active support from most of the provincial governments, is growing. It is not only confined to the hunting of large predators - elephants, rhinos, buffaloes and antelope species are also hunted and killed in this way.

In the recent past provincial and national DEAT spokespersons have even been at pains to promise lion breeders that the industry is not geared for demise. On 9 July 2008 the then Deputy Minister, Rejoice Mabudafhasi, unequivocally assured them that “government does appreciate the existence of the industry and that there is no way that the regulations will eventually lead to the closure of the industry as the industry is an accepted part of the tourism experience package that South Africa markets.”

The industry works more or less as follows: some members only breed lions for the hunting market and sell the lions to the operators of hunting farms; others breed lions for their own hunting operations; and others operate hunting farms where lions are hunted that were bought from breeders. By far the majority of the trophy hunters who kill these lions are from abroad and payments are made in foreign currency.

So, after years of Government idling canned lion breeding and hunting continues to take place in South Africa and in 2008 had reached its highest level ever when about 1050 lions were shot (figures for 2009 are not yet available). Although the Government attempted to add lions to new legislation (TOPS – The Threatened and Protected Species) in 2006 making it more difficult to sell captive raised lions to hunters these regulations were challenged in court by the South African Predator Breeders Association (SAPBA) and the legal proceedings are still underway. According to the High Court Judgment (Case No.: 1900/2007, in the case between The South African Predator Breeders Association, Matthys Christiaan Mostert, Deon Cilliers and the Minister Of Environmental Affairs and Tourism) SAPBA has 123 members.

Since the legal proceedings began, including two appeals against earlier decisions by the courts, the hunting of captive raised lions increased significantly as breeders rushed to sell lions to hunters, some at bargain prices. Nearly all lions hunted in South Africa are raised in captivity (apart from the lions that are hunted in areas that share unfenced borders with Protected Areas). Officially 322 lions were hunted in the country in 2006; 700 in 2007 and 702 in 2008. However, according to the SAPBA at least 1050 lions were hunted in 2008 (the highest annual number on record).

Although the original regulations were intended to come into force in June 2007, this only happened on 1 February 2008 after lions had been removed from the list of “large predators”. The TOPS regulations initially stipulated that lions raised in captivity must be allowed to range free for two years before being hunted. The SAPBA argued that the clauses concerning lions would make it impossible for predator breeders to make a living and said that this would also have a negative impact on employment in some rural areas and deprive the local economies of significant revenue brought into the country by foreign hunters.

As a result of the pending court cases the situation remains as follows:

- All hunting of lions remains regulated by provincial legislation. There are material differences between the provisions and measures applicable in the nine provinces.
- In Mpumalanga it is a requirement that the size of the area in which a lion may be hunted must be no less than 1000 hectares.
- In the North West province it is a requirement that the size of the area in which a lion may be hunted must be no less than 1000 hectares. A lion must be free ranging for a period of only 96 hours.
- In Gauteng the minimum area is 400 hectares, but that may be deviated from by permit.
- In the Free State only a minimum of 100 hectares is required. A lion must be free ranging for a period of three months before it may be hunted.
- The rest of the provinces have no legislation in respect of minimum size of areas in which the hunt may take place.

The issue of canned lion hunting has attracted widespread international condemnation from animal rights and welfare organisations and in South Africa. Both the Professional Hunters Association (PHASA) and the Confederated Hunting Associations of South Africa (CHASA), the largest hunting

organisations in South Africa, have condemned the practice, even though, the South Africa Predator Breeders Association (SAPBA) points out though that some of the hunters who sell captive raised lions to foreign hunters are members of these organisations.

According to Carel van Heerden (Chairman of the South African Predator Breeders' Association), "All other hunting is also done in a controlled environment. Lion hunting is no different. Why be selective?" he asked. "Show me a farmer who doesn't feed his rhino. Show me farmer who doesn't supply extra food to his antelope, his impalas or his eland, particularly in winter. The government must either be in support of hunting or it must not. The government can't be in support of hunting on certain issues and not others," he said. "How come the hunting organisations oppose us? It is all political manoeuvring with some of them trying to win the support of government. Many of our members are members of PHASA and if they (PHASA) were to be honest in their claims that they don't support the breeding of predators for hunting they should expel these members... Because lion hunting is a sensitive political issue it has been given a bad name... we hear all these references to "canned hunting" of lions but all hunting in South Africa is takes place under controlled circumstances," he said. "The situation regarding controlled hunting should have been resolved long ago. We think they should have made a decision as long three years ago." <sup>9</sup>

The Department of Water and Environmental Affairs commissioned a Report in the second half of 2008 on the captive breeding of lions in South Africa. In June 2009 the Minister said that the final report was "expected soon" (Question No. 265: National Assembly, 26 June 2009). So, even though the Department has known about the problem for years and the report should have been completed in February 2009, it has still not been made available to the public and it has not announced any plan to deal with captive lions. Some organisations have also pointed out that there are many lion farms/parks which have a constant supply of cubs available for petting but no effort is made to find out what happens to these animals when they grow up and it is feared that some end up being hunted.

In March 2010 the Minister told Parliament that she did not know how many lions were hunted nationally in 2008 or 2009 and suggested that the relevant officials in each province be contacted for this information (Question No. 705: National Assembly, 15 March 2010) . The Department also has no centralised data base from which to collate hunting permit data.

The practice of breeding and hunting predators is unsustainable and will leave a legacy of thousands of lions that cannot be rehabilitated back into the wild. This problem is multiplying the longer this untenable situation is left unaddressed. In addition to opposing the hunting of lions many animal rights and welfare organisations have pointed out that the state has done nothing to deal with the welfare of the approximately 4000<sup>10</sup> lions in captivity in South Africa. The SAPBA has repeatedly warned that many of its members will abandon their animals if it becomes economically unviable to keep them, as may happen if hunting is only allowed after lions have been released for two years. This will create a major welfare crisis.

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<sup>9</sup> Interviewed by Mike Cadman in 2009.

<sup>10</sup> According the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs their preliminary study (done in early 2009) indicated that there were approximately 2196 captive bred lions in the North West province and 800 in the Free State province. They did not have figures at that time for the other provinces. (Question no.265: National Assembly, 26 June 2009)

A further new and disturbing trend is that several people have been found in possession of with ground lion bones which are being sold into Eastern medicine markets in place of increasingly scarce tiger bones which are much sought after in these markets. It is feared that female lions, which have lower trophy values than males, and small or undersize lions are killed to service this trade. It is believed that provincial departments have already issued several permits allowing this practice. The Department of Water and Environmental Affairs told Parliament on 11 February 2010 that they did not believe that the trade in lion bones would affect the number in captivity because “Most of the lion bones which are exported are by-products of the lion hunting industry and this should thus not result in an increase in the captive breeding of lions.” This answer, to a written question submitted to the Minister, is patently absurd because the Department itself acknowledges that more than 99% of all lions hunted in South Africa are captive raised. The answer is indicative of the Departments apparent lack of willingness to address the issue of the welfare of lions in captivity.

See **Annexure 8** - [http://www.shingalana.co.za/hunting\\_specials\\_at\\_shingalana.html](http://www.shingalana.co.za/hunting_specials_at_shingalana.html) - for an example of canned lions on offer for hunting.

## HUNTING OF RHINOS

South Africa is the bastion of the world’s white rhino population (*Ceratotherium simum*) and, along with Namibia, holds the bulk of the black rhino population (*Diceros ssp. bicornis minor* and *Diceros bicornis ssp. bicornis*). Not only does South Africa have the world’s largest population of white rhinos, about 17 500, but it is also the world’s top destination for hunters wishing to kill the animals. South Africa is quite literally the last bastion for white rhinos in the world but the colossal growth of rhinos killing – including trophy hunting - and the concomitant insufficient anti-poaching capacity ability and poor record keeping means that rhinos are facing untold suffering, exploitation and death which has the potential to once again threaten the survival of the entire species.

Trophy hunting in the 19th century devastated rhino populations in Africa. By the 1920s there were fewer than a hundred of the southern white rhinos left in the Umfolozi region in KwaZulu-Natal. Preservation, overt protection and habitat and range expansion strategies led to the growth in the number of rhinos in South Africa and brought them back from the brink of extinction. An important component of these strategies was the prohibition of hunting. There is now a completely different situation at play, where the hunting, poaching and trade of rhinos, both illegal and legal, are once again not only severely impacting on the species but also causing untold suffering and death for the individuals involved.

Hunting operators regularly buy rhinos sold at auctions held by SANParks, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Wildlife and from private farms. The rhinos sold by SANParks are usually captured in the world famous Kruger National Park and those by KZN Wildlife are captured in Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park, Mkhuze and a number of other provincial parks.



This rhino was killed in the Eastern Cape Province by a Danish hunter  
Source: <http://www.huntingreport.com/worldupdate.cfm?articleid=447>

Once a rhino has been sold as a trophy animal it has little chance of escape. Rhinos drink daily and when placed on relatively small game farms are easy to track and kill. The Threatened and Protected Species Regulations (TOPS) stipulate that rhinos must be allowed to fend for themselves as free ranging animals for two years before being hunted but it is unclear how often authorities follow up after rhino sales to see if the animal is still alive. Some hunting operators acknowledge that once a rhino has been selected as a trophy animal it has no chance of escape. Kukuzans Hunting Safaris and Tours in North West, which also offers lion hunting, note on their website “We have heard many people refer to their rhino hunt as “shooting at a barn”. In many cases this is true as many surplus rhinos each year are sold from game reserves to commercial ranches. These rhinos are then hunted after a number of years and usually do not lose their placid nature.”

Rhinos are sometime hunted in provincial game reserves and including the Dwesa Nature Reserve in the Eastern Cape and in the communal hunting land bordering Mkuze in KZN. They are also occasionally hunted in the Timbavati and Klaserie Private Game Reserves which are part of the APNR.

In 2008 the shooting of four rhinos by Vietnamese hunters in the Dwesa Nature Reserve caused widespread outrage when it was discovered that one animal had been wounded and the fact that the authorities had decided to allow the animals to be killed although the same amount of money could have been raised by selling them live to private nature reserves.

In November 2009, a report released by TRAFFIC, an organisation which monitors the illegal trade in wildlife and plants, showed that as many as 200 rhino horns may have been illegally laundered by hunters and hunting operators. “It is of grave concern that not all hunting trophies remain non-commercial “personal effects”, a phenomenon that has coincided with the advent of Vietnamese nationals as sport hunting clients. In 2003, for the first time, South Africa issued CITES (Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna) permits for nine rhino trophies and two rhino horns to be exported to Vietnam.” The TRAFFIC report also states that “from that modest beginning, trade in rhino horns to Vietnam rapidly grew to entail some 286 rhino horns from 2006 through 2009...Whilst this number appears high, Vietnamese nationals reportedly conducted 203 white rhino hunts in South Africa in 2005-2007), which would have yielded 406 rhino horns.”

Rhino poaching in South Africa has reached its highest level in modern times and between 1 January 2010 and the 1 July 2010 at least 124 white rhinos have been killed by poachers. According to SANParks 55 where from national parks, while the provinces have lost 38 rhinos collectively and the private sector has also collectively lost 31 rhinos. Of the rhinos killed, 5 were black rhino and 119 white rhino.

In 2009 at least 122 rhinos were killed by poachers. Five of these were black rhinos. The TRAFFIC report also notes that “The number of rhinos on some private properties remains unknown and undisclosed hunting could presumably occur at the discretion of individual owners. South Africa’s new legislation is designed to track live rhinos and rhino horn in the private sector, and to control the issuance of hunting permits, but the overall impact will ultimately depend upon effective implementation.”

The South African government has published new regulations designed to try and limit the number of rhinos hunted illegally. Yet despite the abuses within the industry selling rhino hunts to foreigners remains a growing and lucrative business.

It is clear that some rhinos are hunted under conditions that are acknowledged by hunting associations to constitute ‘canned hunting’.

Last year SANParks captured and sold white 251 rhinos. In 2010 (up until 1 July), SANParks has sold 38. Some of these rhinos were sold to hunting outfitters.

See also the Animal Rights Africa Special Report – *Under Siege: Rhinoceroses in South Africa* (August 2009)

[http://www.animalrightsafrica.org/Archive/ARA\\_Report\\_Under\\_Siege\\_Rhinos\\_in\\_South\\_Africa2009\\_.pdf](http://www.animalrightsafrica.org/Archive/ARA_Report_Under_Siege_Rhinos_in_South_Africa2009_.pdf)

## HUNTING OF ELEPHANTS AND BUFFALO

Elephants and buffalo are regularly hunted in South Africa, some in the provincial and private nature reserves that share unfenced boundaries with the Kruger National Park. Elephants and buffalo are also hunted on some private reserves and farms. These properties are all fenced and once a hunt

commences the animal is unlikely to escape and will be killed within the stipulated duration of the hunt.

South Africa has a CITES quota that allows the exportation of 300 elephants tusks (listed as the trophies from 150 elephants). Zimbabwe has the highest quota for any country is allowed to export 1000 tusk as the trophies of 500 elephants.

In the past Animal Rights Africa has attempted to get accurate elephant hunting statistics from the Department of Environment Affairs but researchers are usually referred to provincial authorities, some of whom are unwilling or unable to supply accurate, up to date information. It is unclear how many buffalo are hunted annually in South Africa.

## HUNTING OF LEOPARDS

Currently South Africa has an annual CITES export permit quota for 150 leopard trophies, however it is widely acknowledged amongst animal rights and welfare organisations, conservation bodies and hunting associations that the permit system is poorly administered and the numbers of leopards killed annually is not known. Nearly all leopard hunts involve placing a bait (a carcass of an animal) in a tree or bush and waiting for the leopard to investigate the scent.

Many leopards are hunted on the pretext that they are ‘problem animals’. Landowners claiming to have problems with leopards are regularly granted permits to kill the animals although no attempt is made to confirm that the problem exists in reality. This means that far more leopards are hunted than reflected in Environmental Affairs CITES figures.

The national Department of Environmental Affairs and provincial authorities have no accurate figures for leopard populations. The national Department allocates hunting permits to each province but it is unclear on what research, if any, the Department basis its allocation or how this can be considered sustainable.

In a document entitled ‘Leopard (*Panthera Pardus*) Case Study’, presented at a 2008 conference in Mexico authors Yolán Friedmann and Kathy Traylor-Holzer note that “If the current CITES quota for Leopards is fully utilized in South Africa, without allocations for the provinces being made on sustainability assessments, the CITES quota will not be sustainable and trade will possibly lead to the decline in the Leopard population.”

The editor of the widely read US based online hunting magazine, The Hunting Report ([www.huntingreport.com](http://www.huntingreport.com)) noted in April 2010 that “Last month I warned you of a developing problem in South Africa regarding leopard hunting. Basically the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) mistakenly issued leopard allocations to 165 operators/landowners. The problem with this is that only 50 CITES export permits are available for leopard (*Limpopo has a quota for 50 leopards, South Africa has a quota of 150*)“...“When I contacted PHASA just before going to press with the March issue, President Eduard Katzke and executive committee member Richard Lemmer were working feverishly to address the problem.”

One cannot but note the irony that South Africa chose a leopard as the official mascot for the 2010 FIFA World Cup (Zakumi).

## HUNTING OF CHEETAHS

South Africa does not have a CITES export for quota and the animals are not legally hunted in the country but a recent report has revealed that some cheetahs from South Africa are exported to Namibia to take advantages of the Cites hunting quota allocated to that country. Conversely, free ranging Cheetahs are also captured in South Africa, sold and exported illegally to Namibia to 'canned hunting' facilities where they are hunted in small fenced camps. Taking advantage of Namibia's CITES quota for trophy-hunted, between 1996 and 2005, more than 400 Cheetahs were exported from South Africa, the majority of which were listed as 'captive bred'.

## HUNTING OF EXOTIC SPECIES

A range of 'animals, and sometimes birds, that are not indigenous to the region are bred for hunting on South African game farms. These include, Barbary sheep, Fallow deer, Himalayan tahr, Pere Davids deer, Red stag, Asian water buffalo, Red lechwe (which do not occur naturally south of the Okavango Delta), and Lichtenstein's hartebeest (although a small population occurred in the Kruger National Park.

English pheasant are also bred in cages and released in front of hunters. Some birds are physically thrown in the air as targets for hunters. The hunting of English peasants in this manner has been condemned by the South African Wingshooters Association.

## HUNTING OF HYBRIDS

A wide range of colour variants or hybrid animals are bred for trophy hunting. It is widely acknowledged that the breeding of these animals in no way enhances South Africa's biodiversity or contributes to conservation and is undertaken purely to earn the breeders more money. Variants bred for hunting include white springbok, black springbok, copper springbok, black impala, white blesbok, blesbok/bontebok cross, golden oryx (gemsbok), golden wildebeest and blesbok/bontebok and blue/black wildebeest cross breeds.

Hunters often pay more to shoot an unusual colour variant of a species. Breeding of the animals for trophy hunting is widespread, even though formal hunting bodies say they oppose the practice. For example, CHASA says it is "opposed to the deliberate breeding of hybrids and scarce genetic variations of certain species, and discourages its members and hunters in general to hunt these examples of a particular species...CHASA discourages its members and hunters in general from placing higher financial value on recessive colour variations by paying premiums to hunt these animals."



Source: [www.lioncachetsafaris.com/trophyroom.htm](http://www.lioncachetsafaris.com/trophyroom.htm)

## HUNTING SO CALLED ‘PROBLEM ANIMALS’

Unfairly, some animals find themselves ‘enemies of the state’. Most of the provincial authorities continue to classify entire species as so-called ‘damage causing animals’ or ‘problem animals’. Earlier Ordinances classified the Cape wild dog as ‘vermin’ and as a result they were hunted and poisoned to the brink of extinction. Baboons, vervet monkeys, bush pigs, caracals and others have endured the same systematic hostility for years. There is unrestricted and routine hunting and killing of so-called ‘damage causing’ or ‘problem’ species for 365 days a year. As a consequence they are ruthlessly exterminated. Farmers are free to do what they like with them, whether that means capturing or killing them. Animal protection groups argue that if these obsolete ordinances are not dispensed with these species will also reach the end of the line.

Many farmers wage war against so called “problem animals”. Jackals and caracal are poisoned, shot, caught in gin traps or cage traps. Leopards are often killed in traps intended for these species. Gin traps are still manufactured in South Africa, mainly by a factory which is near Prince Albert in the Western Cape. Packs of dogs are sometimes used when hunting jackals, caracals, bushpig and in some area when hunting leopards.

## HUNTING WITH DOGS

Dogs are used for hunting in a number of different ways in South Africa.

### Safari hunting

Organised safari hunting with dogs takes place legally in a number of South African provinces including the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Mpumalanga. So called problem animals like bushpigs are hunted as are leopard in some provinces. One outfitter that specializes in hunting with dogs states on it's website that "these hunts are conducted over a pack of 6 to 10 hounds. You the client will be guided into the treed cat to make a clean kill. The hounds are not allowed to tear the quarry to pieces!" ([www.huntingtheboxh.co.za](http://www.huntingtheboxh.co.za)) Dogs are also used to point, flush and retrieve birds, particularly waterfowl. The Department of Environmental Affairs says that legislation permits dogs to be used for hunting but only to track a wounded animal and to point, flush or retrieve a species listed as threatened or protected. The hunted animal may not be killed by the dog.

### Poaching

Hunting with dogs is common in many rural areas but recently conservationists in greater Cape Town have reported instances of dogs being used to killed game in semi urban nature reserves. This also happens on private farms right across the country. Dogs are usually used to flush or corner animals that are sometime shot but more usually speared or beaten to death. This form of hunting is illegal, taking place without the landowner's permission. It is also illegal to allow the dogs to kill game. In some instances the participants view themselves as hunters attempting to supply food to their families and in other cases this form of hunting is undertaken on a commercial basis and the meat from poached animals is transported to urban or semi urban areas for resale.

During some of these hunts large numbers of dogs are used and any wildlife unfortunate enough to be in the area is killed or injured. Participants sometime arrive at a prearranged destination in taxis. There has been considerable conflict with authorities, particularly in KZN over this form of hunting as some rural communities claim it to be a traditional form of hunting. In KwaZulu-Natal, Oribi, which are habitat specific and strongly territorial, are hunted with dogs by people who take wagers on which dog will be first to make a kill. Considerable sums of money are placed on such bets and many participants travel from cities and towns to participate in the hunting or to gamble. The Oribi is facing an increasingly precarious future because of the hunting and habitat loss.

## 'GREEN HUNTING'

Another cause for disquiet is so-called 'green hunting'. This usually involves the darting of an animal with a drug to allow a tourist or hunter the opportunity of being photographed with a live animal. The animal is then given an antidote and released again. This practice is problematic because many animals, particularly rhinos, are being darted repeatedly with serious consequences for their health. Theoretically, 'green hunting' may now only take place if it is to allow *bone fide* scientific management, scientific or veterinary work. According to

TOPS regulations, an animal may be darted (immobilized or tranquillized) by a veterinarian or a person authorized by a veterinarian in writing and in possession of a valid permit, for carrying out a disease control procedure or a scientific experiment or for management purposes, for veterinary treatment of the animal or for translocating or transporting the animal.

Compliance and monitoring in terms of the restrictions listed above may be a problem as it continues to take place in many other parts of the country and is widely advertised by safari and tourism operators. A senior veterinarian who has worked in the wildlife industry for twenty-two years told *Animal Rights Africa* that many green hunts take place illegally but under current legislation authorities are unable to prevent irregularities. "It is easy to make up a story as to why you may want to dart a rhino. For example, all a vet needs to say is that he is inserting a micro-chip – one day it is for the front horn, the next time for the rear horn and the next time it may be to insert a subcutaneous chip," he said. "It goes on all the time and the provincial authorities keep on issuing the permits." He added that "repeated darting is life threatening and completely unethical."

Some hunting outfitters also offer 'green hunting' of large species such as elephant and white rhinos.

## BIRD HUNTING

Hundreds of thousands of birds including speckled pigeons, olive pigeons, several species of doves, francolin, Spur-winged geese, several species of ducks and other geese and Guinea fowl are shot annually. Some, such as the speckled pigeon, are shot because they are considered by farmers to be crop damaging pests and many others are shot for entertainment. Large numbers of small birds are killed in cities and in the countryside by children, and in some cases adults, using pellet guns.

## SNARING

The use of snares is widespread in South Africa and although usually considered as poaching the people who set the snares view themselves as hunters. Most people who set snares come from impoverished rural and semi rural communities and set snares to capture animals or birds to eat. In some areas snaring is a commercial operation and animal carcasses are transported to urban or semi-urban areas for sale.

In many areas these hunters are at the forefront of an extensive 'bushmeat' industry. (Many people mistakenly think the term refers only to the killing of primates in central Africa. Warthogs, antelope, guinea fowl and other species are regularly illegally killed on farms and game farms and transported to informal butcheries for sale).

Snares are usually made of a wire but fishing line or string can be used to trap guinea fowl and small birds. Snares are even set in urban areas and have been found in the Melville Koppies Nature Reserve and other open spaces.

Poison is sometimes used to catch birds for food. Blue cranes have also died after eating poisoned grain.

## HUNTING FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE – ‘MUTI’

Considerable numbers of animals are hunted for the traditional medicine market. Again, while some of these animals are hunted illegally and can be considered poaching the people killing the animals consider themselves hunters fulfilling an important role in society. These mammals, birds, reptiles and marine species are sold at markets across the country including the Mai Mai Market in Johannesburg, at shops in the Warwick Avenue area of Durban, in Zululand and elsewhere.

The body parts, skins or fat of many species, including endangered species, are sold. These include pangolin, honey badger, hippopotamus, leopard, lion, brown hyena, spotted hyena, serval, genet, African civet, a variety of antelope species, crocodile, several species of snakes including the African rock python, several owl and vulture species are many others.

## ANGLING

Although seldom recognised as such angling is hunting and anglers constitute the largest group of hunters in the country. Angling takes several forms: fishing along the ocean, shoreline, deep-sea angling from boats and freshwater fishing in dams and rivers. Many anglers do so to supplement their food supply while deep sea fishing and fly fishing for exotic species such as trout is often undertaken for entertainment.

There are also a small number of people who participate in spear-fishing. Commercial fishing constitutes the largest organized form of hunting in the country. Although the authorities have drawn up a wide range of regulations specifying the species which may be caught, the size of the individual fish and the number of each species there are no rules regarding the use of live bait and other rights issue.

## CONCLUSION

Internationally, since the 1980s there has been a fundamental shift in the way animals are considered and thought about. This has signalled an expansion of the inclusive circle of moral rights and empathy to include nonhuman animals.

Hunting and killing wild animals' works against the global call for humanity to transform its relationship with the natural world. The need for this transformation arises from concern about the negative impact humans are having on the earth and the destruction of biodiversity, together with emerging moral discourses based on notions of environmentalism, animal rights and animal welfare.

This 'greening of society' imposes expectations that to be a good world citizen one must express a sensitive, concerned attitude toward nature and a humane and caring consideration of animals. Hunting harms not only the hunted species and individual but also 'nature' itself and it is therefore becoming increasingly contested and viewed as an antisocial act in contemporary society.

The fate of humans and other animals is inextricably linked and to meet the growing threats to our shared world, as well as the massive extinction of species, only a sweeping restructuring of the way we see ourselves and our role in the natural world can help turn this backlash around. Urgently needed are new, ethics-based approaches to wildlife conservation. However, the way conservation is currently practiced in South Africa has become part of the problem, not part of the solution.

The trade, sale and hunting of South Africa's wild animals is driven by commodification, commercialisation and profit rather than by compassion or robust science and as a consequence the threats wild animals are facing are powerfully linked to South Africa's current uncompassionate conservation policies of overt consumptive use and inadequate policing and enforcement measures and resources to protect wildlife. Hunting of South Africa's wildlife is booming but concomitantly it is also a story of cruelty and environmental devastation in which wild animals are no longer individual beings but just a mass of commodities.

Government agencies, such as SANParks and provincial conservation bodies (which are tasked with protecting South Africa wild animals and our heritage), profit-motivated animal dealers and middlemen - and a seemingly bottomless market - drive this practice, which hides behind the vague, flawed, cruel, unsustainable and reprehensible concept of 'sustainable use'. In South Africa the term 'sustainable use' has become an anathema used to mask activities where animals are being killed merely for fun or 'sport'. It is an alibi for profit-making, exploitation and gratuitous violence against wild animals. Allowing profit to be the justification for hunting means that as a society South African are condoning the idea that: for the right price we will allow anything, no matter how immoral. On the ground, these policies are literally translating into a war against wildlife. Wild animals, who were also victims and suffered under colonialism and apartheid, now continue to be victims under 'sustainable use' policies.

But even the implementation of the concept of 'sustainable use' under the Convention on Biological Diversity, requires adequate tools for assessment, monitoring and adaptive management. However, in the South African hunting and wildlife management context there is a lack of coherent approaches to defining and assessing sustainable use.

That hunting is heavily promoted by the South African government is widely acknowledged. What is not widely recognised is that, as outlined in this document:

- Hunting in South Africa is poorly administered;
- Hunting regulations are regularly flouted;
- Canned hunting of a number of species is flourishing;
- Wild animals, particularly elephants and buffalo from the Kruger National Park are regularly hunted in private and provincial reserves alongside the national park;
- Hunting threatens the non-consumptive tourism industry.

The national Department of Water and Environmental Affairs keeps poor records and sometimes even supplies inaccurate information to Parliament. This is shown in their own written Parliamentary replies. The situation is as bad or worse, in some provinces where the hunting permit system is in

tatters, the administration of TOPS is misunderstood or ignored, and cash and skills shortages result in limited efficient monitoring or management of hunting.

That some hunters and breeders of animals for trophy hunting are unscrupulous is acknowledged by hunting organisations themselves.

The hunting of animals that are supposed to have protection in National Parks is a fundamental policy and governance shift and should be raising alarm bells and fuelling debate. Numerous documents and quotes used in this Report also show that many hunters clearly believe that, contrary to SANParks' denials, the Kruger National Park is a valuable source of large trophy animals that are hunted in provincial and private nature reserves sharing unfenced boundaries with the national park.

Over the years SANParks has been at pains to tell the public that hunting in the Kruger National Park is not "an option" and that they "will never allow it, come hell or high water."<sup>11</sup> While officially and technically there is no trophy hunting allowed in national parks, such as the Kruger National Park, the question that SANParks appears to be avoiding is, are Kruger animals being hunted? The fact that Government is actively allowing boundary fences to be removed between the Kruger and other areas where hunting takes place, and that animals from Kruger cross into these areas, means that it is highly likely that some of these animals are being trophy hunted. Since SANParks/government has allowed these fences to be removed the onus would be on them to prove that this is not the case, i.e. that Kruger animals are not being hunted.

Can SANParks assure the local and global public that Kruger animals are not being hunted in these areas? If SANParks can give these assurances then what are they going to do about the hunting operators that are therefore wrongly using Kruger's name to promote their business?

There is a great risk to placing an economic value on wildlife. Policymakers, practitioners, and academics alike need to move beyond considering wildlife as merely a consumptive use of resources. Conservation strategies and ecotourism strategies should be ethical aim for a higher level of awareness and should emphasise the intrinsic value and worth of wild animals rather than pushing income generation and commodification. South Africa should be emphasising greater awareness and respect for nature (by local communities and tourists). A higher level of awareness or appreciation could ensure greater potential for favourable conservation practices over the long term. This will offer communities an opportunity to improve their well-being and economic livelihood and will encourage individuals to protect and respect wildlife. Sustainable ethical tourism together with education and awareness-raising will in turn allow communities to largely abandoned environmentally destructive practices.

## Recommendations

Given all the evidence at hand, *Animal Rights Africa* believes hunting is an incorrect strategy to preserve Africa's wildlife heritage and to promote ecotourism. Moreover, humanity has a duty of compassion and humanity towards animals and also at stake are issues of justice. The time is overdue for individuals, civil society and governments to recognise animals as complex, living beings, rather than as tools, objects and trophies.

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<sup>11</sup> SANParks Media release 16 September 2002.

*Animal Rights Africa* therefore recommends that:

1. The entire concept of *res nullius* in relation to national, and provincial parks, needs to be scrapped. SANParks and its Board should be leading such an initiative.
2. In line with Section 24 of NEMA, the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs must initiate a national public consultation and review process of the 1996 Agreement signed between the National Parks Board (now SANParks) and the APNR, including the 1993 removal of the fences between the APNR and the Kruger National Park.
3. There is an urgent need for a widespread and public debate on the concept of sustainable utilisation in relation to hunting. *Animal Rights Africa* believes that after thorough scrutiny it will be revealed that this concept is neither valid nor acceptable in South Africa.
4. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive, transparent and public examination and investigation of the hunting industry which should be conducted by a wide range of experts and not biased in favour of so called sustainable utilisation. Should this study be undertaken the South African public will be appalled at what happens in South Africa's bloody and ruthless hunting industry and will call for a speedy end to a practice which has no place in the modern world. The South African government should impose a moratorium on hunting until the findings of this public enquiry have been released.
5. Given that it is non-consumptive, ethical wildlife ecotourism which is a sustainable strategy to protect wildlife while also meeting human needs the government should be switching more land to photographic use and away from hunting.
6. Government conservation agencies (provincially and nationally) must publicly make available, through websites, up-to-date applications for hunting permits and hunting statistics.
7. Tourists need to be more proactive in informing themselves about which hunting and breeding destinations in South Africa are doubling up as ecotourism destinations and avoid choosing such places.



# "The Adventure Source"

## SOUTH AFRICA



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### South Africa Prices 2009 Big 5 Safaris

#### WHITE RHINO and PLAINS GAME

(10 days minimum)

1 client with 1 professional hunter @ \$1200 per day  
Non-hunting companions @ \$200 per day per person  
Children under the age of 15 @ \$100 per child per day  
Concession fee of \$85 per hunter per day if applicable  
Night before safari starts in camp @ \$150 per person  
Add Government Value Added Tax (14%) to the above

#### TROPHY ELEPHANT and PLAINS GAME PRICE ON APPLICATION

#### CAPE BUFFALO and PLAINS GAME

(7 days minimum)

1 client with 1 professional hunter @ \$1150 per day  
2 clients with 1 professional hunter @ \$750 per hunter per day  
Non-hunting companions @ \$200 per day per person  
Children under the age of 15 @ \$100 per child per day  
Concession fee of \$85 per hunter day if applicable  
Night before safari starts in camp @ \$150 per person  
Add Government Value Added Tax (14%) to the above

#### LEOPARD and PLAINS GAME

(14 days minimum)

1 client with 1 professional hunter @ \$1500 per day  
Non-hunting companions @ \$200 per day per person  
Children under the age of 15 @ \$100 per child per day  
Concession fee of \$85 per hunter day if applicable  
Night before safari starts in camp @ \$150 per person  
Add Government Value Added Tax (14%) to the above

#### LION and PLAINS GAME

(16 days minimum)

PRICE ON APPLICATION

#### BIG 5 COMBINATION

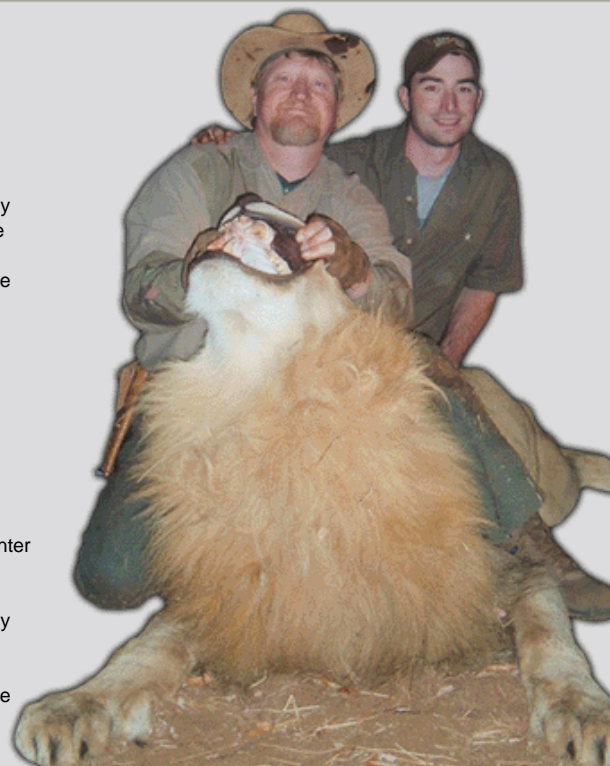
Any combination will be quoted for separately.

#### PLAINS GAME SAFARI

1 client with 1 professional hunter @ \$575 per day  
2 clients with 1 professional hunter @ \$400 per hunter per day  
Non-hunting companions @ \$200 per day per person  
Children under the age of 15 @ \$100 per day per child  
Concession fee of \$85 per hunter per day (certain areas only)  
Night before safari starts in camp @ \$150 per person  
Add Government Value Added Tax (14%) to the above.

#### SPECIALIST TROPHY SAFARIS

Safaris on which a client wishes to hunt for a few specific species only are classified as Specialist Safaris. Trophy fees and daily rate for these safaris will be quoted for upon request. These safaris are usually more expensive than the norm.



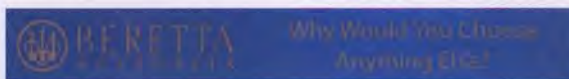
SPECIES	AREA CHARGE	TROPHY FEES	LICENCE
Baboon	T/C/N	\$ 300	
Blesbok	N/C/F	\$ 675	
Blesbok White	C	\$ 1,000	
Bontebok	C	\$ 2,500	
Buffalo Cape	T	P.O.R.	\$225
Bushbuck Limpopo	T	\$ 950	
Bushbuck Cape	N/C	\$ 975	
Bushpig	N/C	\$ 650	
Caracal	T/C	\$ 1,300	
Duiker Grey	T/N/C	\$ 350	
Duiker Red	N	\$ 1,675	
Duiker Blue	N/C	\$ 1,500	
Eland Cape	T/N/C/F	\$ 2,500	\$520
Elephant	T	P.O.R.	
Fallow Deer	C	\$ 1,100	
Gemsbok	C	\$ 1,675	\$150
Giraffe	T/N	\$ 2,650	
Grysbok Cape	C	\$ 1,200	
Hartebeest Red	T/N/C/F	\$ 1,100	\$300
Hippo	T/N	P.O.R.	
Hyena Spotted	T	P.O.R.	
Impala Southern	T/N/C	\$ 500	
Jackal	T/N/C	\$ 250	
Klipspringer	T	\$ 1000	
Kudu Greater	T/N	\$ 1,800	\$400
Kudu Cape	C	\$ 1,500	\$500
Lechwe Red	C	P.O.R.	\$400
Leopard	T/N	P.O.R.	
Lion	T	P.O.R.	

## ANNEXURE 2

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## South Africa - Black and White Rhino, Buffalo, Elephant, Crocodile, Leopard and Lion

### CAPE BUFFALO

Two areas for Buffalo Hunting in SOUTH AFRICA: Greater Kruger Reserve Concession, and Mauricedale Private Reserve (23000 acres near the south border of the Kruger Park). Greater Kruger Reserve forms part of the Kruger National Park. There is no fence between the Kruger and the Reserve and the concession is 60,000 hectare big. It has a classic African camp with no fence and you can expect the sounds of lions, hyena, elephant, leopard at night. It is definitely one of the best and premier buffalo hunting concessions in Africa where you can see 3,000 - 4,000 buffalo in a four day hunt 2 Types of buffalo to choose from:

1. a trophy bull: the horns must be bigger than 40 inches; 7 days required.
2. a dagga bull is an old, matured, hard-bossed male up to 39 inches; 4 days required.

#### GREATER KRUGER RESERVE Concession (Ref EH-SA-13)

Trophy bull (>40"):  
Total Cost: US\$25,500/ Euro 17,850  
Made of:  
Trophy = US\$18,500  
Daily Rate = US \$6,750 ( 7 days @ \$850 pd plus 14% Tax)  
License Fee = US\$250  
A deposit of US\$5,000 is needed.

Dagga bull: (up to 39"):  
Total Cost: US\$20,500 / Euro 14,350  
Made of:  
Trophy = US\$16,374  
Daily Rate = US\$3,876 ( 4 days @ \$850 pd plus 14% Tax)  
License Fee = US\$250  
A deposit of US\$2,500 is needed.

#### MAURICEDALE PRIVATE GAME RESERVE (Ref EH-SA-14)

- Trophy price is determined by the estimated size of the horns. .
- Trophy fees include 3 days of accommodation and license fee:

<36 inches: US \$14,500 / Euro 10,150  
36-38 inches: US \$15,000 / Euro 10,500  
38-40 inches: US \$17,500 / Euro 12,250  
>40 inches: US \$19,500 / Euro 13,650

#### LEOPARD HUNTING:

Our company work very hard to hunt big tom cats, we spend a lot of time and money in pre-baiting of leopard long in advance of clients arrival. We do not hunt females, neither young male.

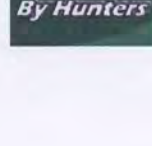
GREATER KRUGER RESERVE Concession: (Ref EH-SA-15)  
Total \$35 150 / Euro 24,605  
made of:  
Trophy Fee-\$7,500  
Daily Rate (14 days @ \$1,500 per day plus 15% tax)- \$24 150  
License Fee-\$1,000  
Pre-Baiting-\$2,500

#### LION HUNTS:

GREATER KRUGER RESERVE Concession (Ref EH-SA-16)  
Free range Male lion:  
Total: \$85,000 / Euro 59,500 (all inclusive for 21 days.)  
Made of:  
Trophy Fee-\$33,200  
Daily Rate (21 days @ \$2,000 per day plus 15% tax)- \$48,300  
License Fee-\$1,000  
Pre-Baiting-\$2,500

PRIVATE PROPERTY -Kalahari Desert: (Ref EH-SA-17)  
Hunting takes place on a private property of 50,000 acres in the Kalahari desert of South Africa, bordering Botswana. Quality exceptional.  
Total estimated cost for 7 day hunt for a 6-8 year old male: \$45 000 / Euro 31,500  
made of:  
Trophy Fee -\$38,000;  
Daily Rate - \$850 x 7 days plus 14% tax

## Advertisers





**BOW HUNTING**

1 client with 1 professional hunter @ \$375 per day  
2 clients with 1 professional hunter @ \$275 per day each  
Non-hunting companions @ \$150 per day per person  
Children under the age of 15 @ \$80 per day per child  
Concession fee of \$85 per hunter per day if applicable  
Night before safari starts in camp @ 150 per person  
Add Government Value Added Tax (14%) to the above.

**NOTE: 5% discount on all plains game trophies.**

**Note:** The daily rate is subject to trophy availability and hunting area. The listed Big 5 rates are applicable to concessions to which CVS has exclusivity. These prices are not guaranteed for other concession areas where CVS is required to bid/ tender for specific permits.

Lioness	T	P.O.R.	
Nyala	N	\$ 2,500	
Oribi	N	\$ 2,200	
Ostrich	T/C	\$ 525	
Reedbuck Mountain	N/C/F	\$ 700	\$520
Reedbuck Common	N	\$ 1000	
Rhino White	T/N	P.O.R.	
Sable	T	P.O.R.	
Serval	N	\$ 1,300	
Springbok Black	C	\$ 1,050	
Springbok SA	N/C/F	\$ 675	
Springbok White	C	\$ 1,050	
Steenbok	T/N/C	\$ 500	
Suni Livingstone's	N	\$ 2,750	
Tsessebe	T	\$ 2,750	
Vaal Rhebok	C/N/F	\$ 2,000	
Warthog trophy	T/N	\$ 475	
Waterbuck Common	T	\$ 2,100	
Wildebeest Blue	T/N	\$ 1,000	
Wildebeest Black	N/C/F	\$ 1,250	
Zebra Burchell's	T/N/F	\$ 1,500	
Warthog bait	T	\$ 200	
Impala bait	T	\$ 200	
Zebra bait		\$ 800	
Blue Wildebeest bait		\$ 800	

In most areas but specifically in government controlled areas a strict and limited annual quota for all species is allocated to and paid for in advance by CVS and may not be carried forward to the following year. Consequently the quota for all species will be finalized and agreed upon with each hunting client well in advance of the safari starting date. Once this has been confirmed and the client accepts the quota of animals allocated to his/her safari, CVS will consider them as sold to him/her. If for any reason during or before the safari a client reduces quota allocated to him/her and/or declines the opportunity of hunting any of the animals listed on his/her quota, the full trophy and license fees for such animals will be paid for by the client.

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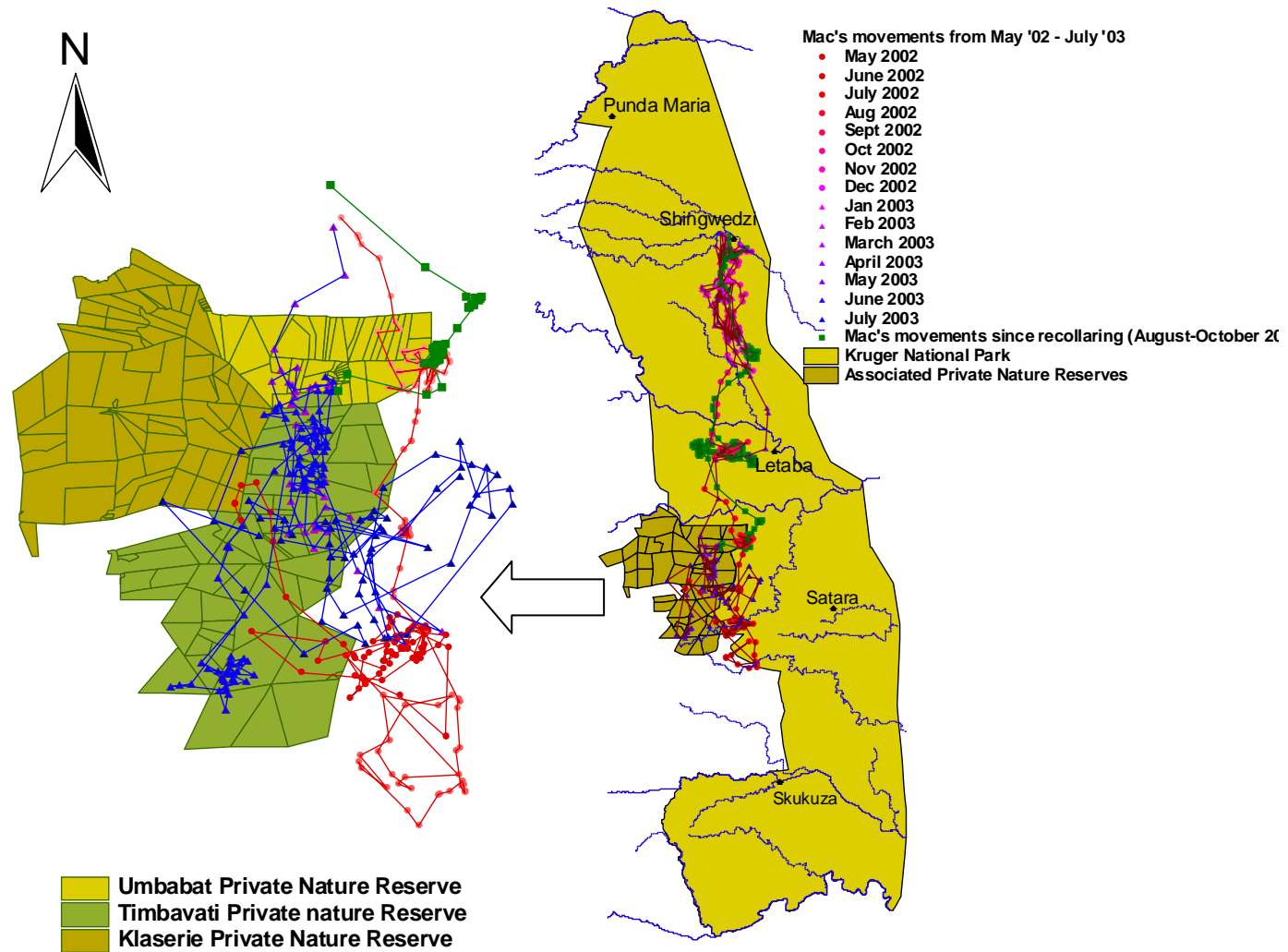
## **Hunting at Shingalana**

All of our hunters are guided by a professional hunter, Mr. Frikkie Jacobs, the owners son. Here at Shingalana Hunting Lodge, there are opportunities to hunt Buffalos, Rhinos and Lions, as well as Crocodiles and Hippos, amongst others. You can hunt the Big 5, as well as the Dangerous 7, for the best trophies. We will meet your needs as far as possible, whether you are a rifle hunter, handgun hunter or a bow hunter, as you will see in the image galleries of [Dangerous game hunting gallery](#) and the [Plains game hunting gallery](#).

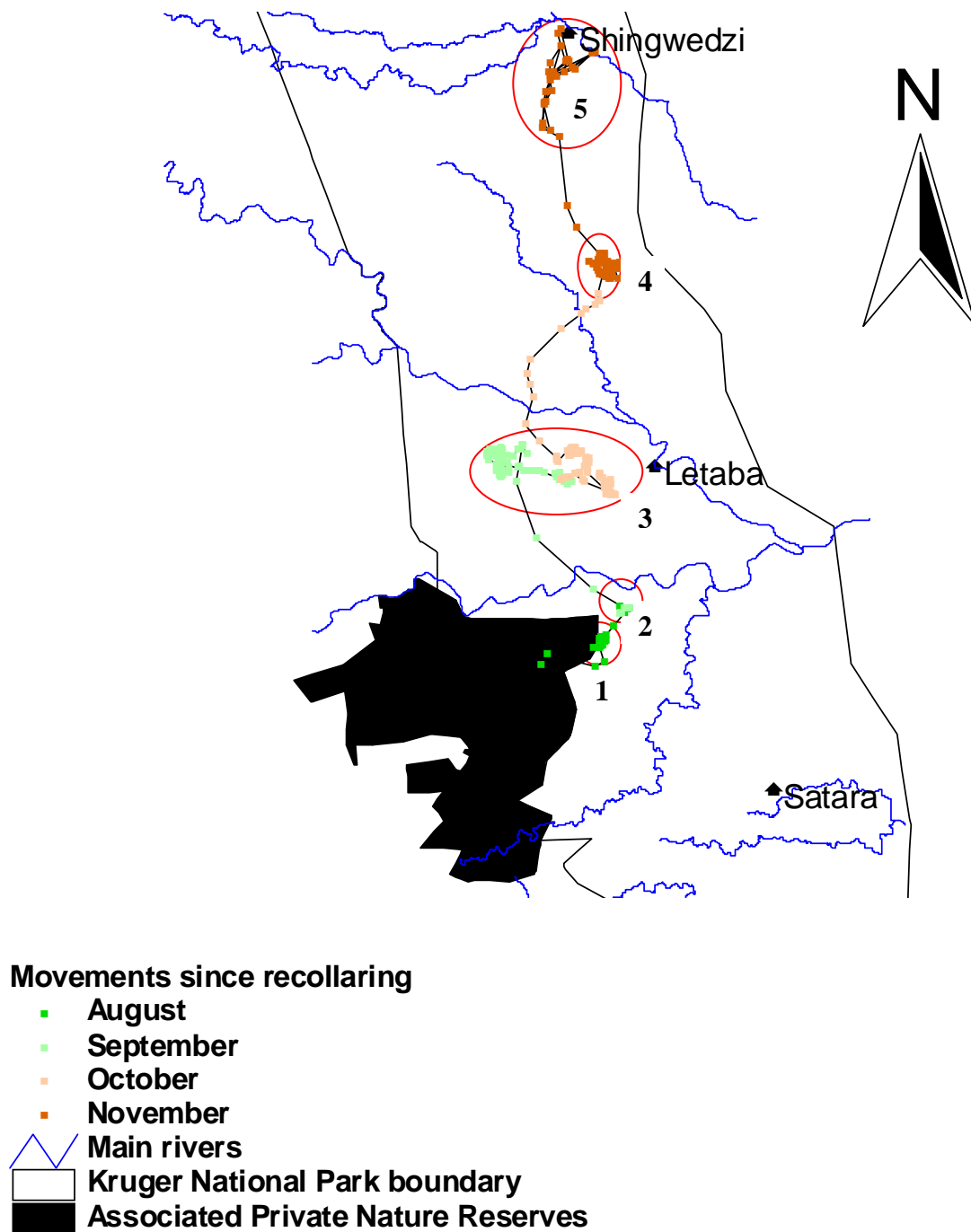
In our luxurious [hunting lodge](#) there are 3 beautiful Chalets, which establishes the perfect bushveld atmosphere. In the morning, provisions have been made for a hearty Brunch, and after the long day you can put your feet up with a nice drink while you listen to the sounds of nature around the camp fire. We also give our hunting guests a lovely three course meal.







**Figure 2** The movements of Mac from May 2002 until November 2003.



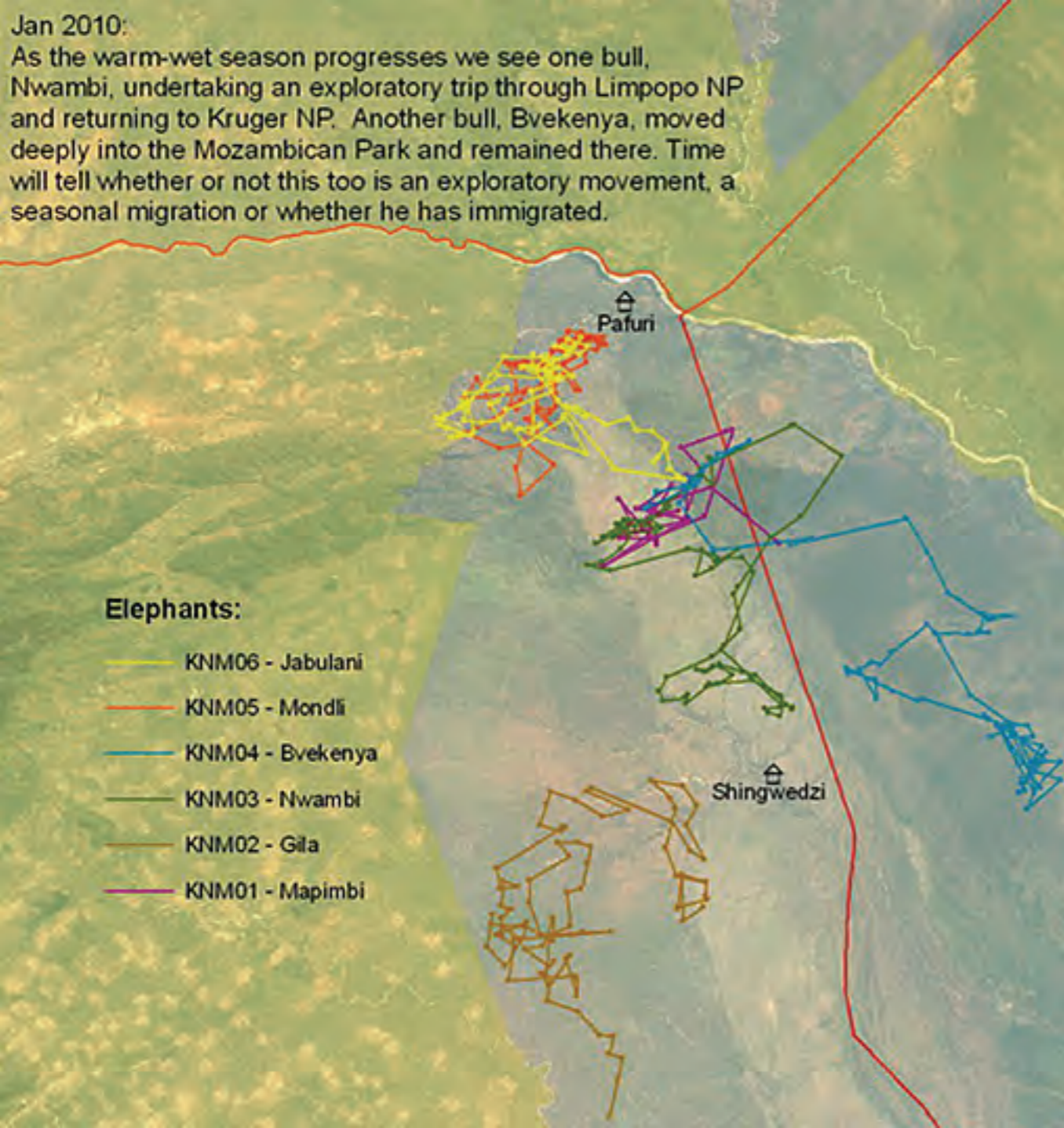
**Figure 3** Mac's movements since his re-collaring on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2003. The numerical 'hotspots' are described in Table 1.

Jan 2010:

As the warm-wet season progresses we see one bull, Nwambi, undertaking an exploratory trip through Limpopo NP and returning to Kruger NP. Another bull, Bvekenya, moved deeply into the Mozambican Park and remained there. Time will tell whether or not this too is an exploratory movement, a seasonal migration or whether he has immigrated.

#### Elephants:

- KNM06 - Jabulani
- KNM05 - Mondli
- KNM04 - Bvekenya
- KNM03 - Nwambi
- KNM02 - Gila
- KNM01 - Mapimbi

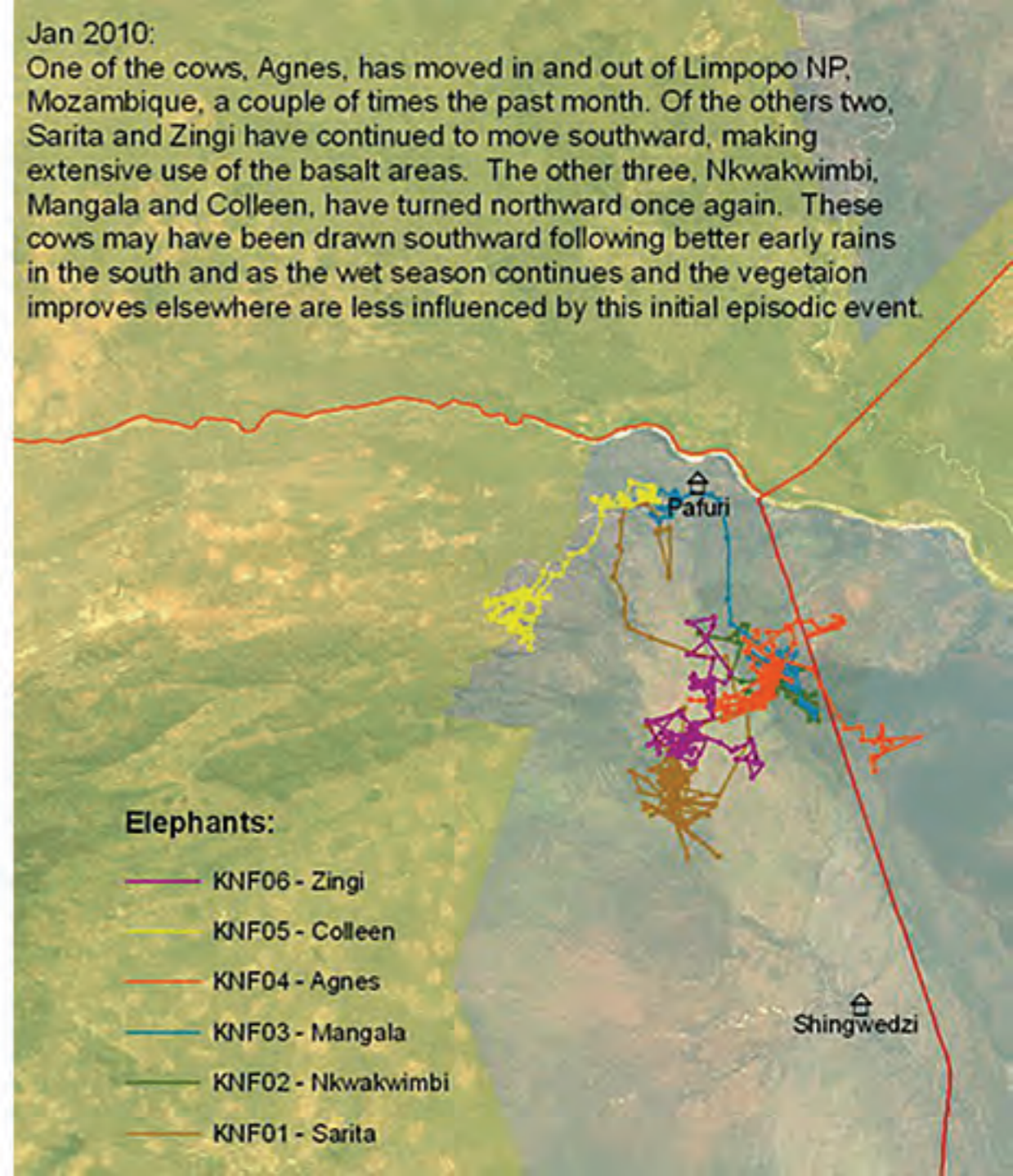


Jan 2010:

One of the cows, Agnes, has moved in and out of Limpopo NP, Mozambique, a couple of times the past month. Of the others two, Sarita and Zingi have continued to move southward, making extensive use of the basalt areas. The other three, Nkwakwimbi, Mangala and Colleen, have turned northward once again. These cows may have been drawn southward following better early rains in the south and as the wet season continues and the vegetation improves elsewhere are less influenced by this initial episodic event.

#### Elephants:

- KNF06 - Zingi
- KNF05 - Colleen
- KNF04 - Agnes
- KNF03 - Mangala
- KNF02 - Nkwakwimbi
- KNF01 - Sarita





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## Moussou Buffel (Old Buffalo) In Mthimkulu Reserve

By Steve Rogers



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Blackbuck Antelope

### Klipspringer Antelope



The unexpected email that arrived on Saturday 23rd August from my best mate and hunting partner Mike Ambrose really got my blood pumping. First and foremost, Mike and I love to hunt bovines....and most of all the Cape buffalo. Mike has hunted several times with Hannes Els of Limcroma Safaris (www.Limcroma.com), and it was from Hannes that we got this....

"On another note, I followed up on an opportunity that came my way. I have the opportunity to hunt Cape buffalo in a new area. This area was recently given to the native community and my good friend Johan Hermann has recently secured the rights to hunt this area, which borders Kruger National Park. 30 miles of river (Letaba River) form the boundary, which we cannot cross. This area has a very good number of dugga boys...lone bulls, because it has not been hunted before like the typical wilderness areas where we hunt (Zimbabwe, Mozambique, etc.). I took the day yesterday to go scout and see the place. It is like a dream for me to even think of the opportunity to hunt a piece of the more than 7 million acres of Kruger Park wilderness where elephants, lion and leopard are as wild as it has been forever. It is amazing!!!! The Kruger Park genetics are some of the best I have ever seen. They have seen several bulls in the 45-inch -plus range lately. Mike, I truly believe this is an opportunity of a lifetime. Do you know of somebody that might want to take advantage of this?"

Did he know someone? He sure did!! Tuesday, 30th September (yes...five weeks later!) saw Mike and I arrive in Johannesburg. We quickly and efficiently cleared our rifles and jumped in the bakkie with Hannes, Melcom (chief cameraman and general all-around good guy) and Kobus (Melcom's dad) for a short transfer to our charter flight that would take us to Phalaborwa.

The one-hour flight to Phalaborwa went quickly. Johan met us at the airport and after quick introductions and a few quick jibes about the wallabies and springboks we made the 1.5-hour drive to camp. Mike and I were a little fried but seeing kudu in the headlights and other eyes shining in the bush on the way in ...and listening to Hannes and Johan talk ...even if it was in Afrikaans...kept me awake!!

We were staying at the Mbaula Camp on the Mthimkulu Reserve which is in Limpopo Province. The camp is right on the banks of the Letaba River and it was like something out of a dream. Waiting to meet us were the rest of the team...Johan's lovely wife, Natasha; Basie, the camp manager; and Ronnie and Kobus, Johan's business partners in this new venture. The camp itself was originally a ranger station for the Kruger Park, and we were staying in the beautifully renovated old horse stables. We soon realized how honored we were and what

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a privilege it was to be with such an experienced and wonderful group of people and more so, to be the first hunters into this area in over 40 years. Mike and I talked quietly by the fire and hoped we could deliver on such a great opportunity.

Despite being very tired...sleep did not come easily. I heard lions roaring in the distance. After about three hours of "trying to sleep," Basie started rummaging around at about 5 am, and we got up to a welcome cup of coffee and a beautiful South African dawn. Mike and I were getting our stuff in order when Johan called us over. Looking down the Letaba, there were three dagga boys not more that 400 meters from camp quietly feeding. My heart was racing, and they all looked great to me....but Johan just smiled and called them "his camp bulls." Unbelievable. What a place. Little did I know I was to repeat this thought many times in the days to follow.

We would be hunting in separate teams and vehicles. I was with Johan and Ronnie with trackers Thomas and Million, and Mike with Hannes, Kobus, Melcom and trackers Jerry and Sam. Johan has named his new company Rigby Big Game Safaris and I said a quiet prayer to myself as we left camp for our first hunt, as I was using my .416 Rigby and hoped it was a good omen.

I was shooting my favourite load of 400gn Swift A Frames and also had 400gn Barnes Banded solids, should they be required. Johan was carrying his Victor Sarasquetta Double in .470NE. Mike was Using his Blaser in .416 RM shooting 400gn Barnes TSX and the same Barnes solids. He had also brought along his Searcy double in .470NE shooting 500gn Barnes TSX bullets.

We left camp and after firing two shots to check my rifle was still shooting straight after the long journey, commenced hunting in earnest.

At about 6:30 am, we saw the backs of two dagga boys feeding in the rushes of the Letaba River. We stalked to about 200 meters from them and decided to hold off, as they appeared to be heading out of the river bed and we wanted to give them a chance to get clear of the boundary of the hunting area (the river). I could not get a really good look at the bulls, and I have not hunted these animals enough to be able to judge them, but I could see that they both had good hard bosses...all I needed to know!! Johan assured me one was a "nice one" and we should try to take him.

The bulls moved up into some Mopani scrub and we got to about 100 meters from them before they realized all was not right and began to stare directly at us. The nature of the scrub is that it is very difficult to get a shooting lane, and I did not have a shot. Pinned down behind a termite mound, we decided to just wait. The wind was a bit fickle and after about 15 minutes I felt it touch the back of my neck and five seconds later the bulls blew out.

Over the next five hours, we tracked them for what must have been eight or 10 kilometers, bumping them twice more. On one occasion, I was on the sticks with the bull in the crosshairs at about 90 meters but had no shot due to some Mopani covering his shoulder. On a couple of occasions we thought we had lost them only for Thomas and Million to find their spoor again. Johan and I got separated from Ronnie and the trackers on one occasion which turned out to be fortuitous in the end....maybe the hunting gods were smiling on me ....as it was about half an hour before we got together again and this elapsed time let the bulls settle.

We spotted them from about 500 meters away lying down (I did not believe it was the same bulls we had been pursuing for hours but sure enough) and planned our stalk carefully as we knew it would be most probably be our last chance. I can clearly remember my heart pounding and sweat running into my eyes as we closed the distance. Johan and I made the final approach alone. The bulls knew something was wrong and were up and staring in our direction. I got onto the sticks and gently pushed the safety off as Johan glassed the bulls. They were standing at 60 meters in thick Mopani...once again no shot. They got nervous and moved away another 20 meters.

"The one on the left....he's not clear yet...see that small gap in the brush...if he takes a step, you have to shoot." The bull took the step, and I fired. I saw him react to the shot by hunching and jumping forward. Perfect! "Shoot again.....he's going down...yes, shoot again." I fired again and down he went. He had nose ploughed the ground and bucked like a bronco spraying blood out of his nose for 40 meters and when the second shot hit him and he went straight down. We were so excited we yelled and embraced. As we walked up to him, he death bellowed.

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Reaching him I began to realize what a great trophy he was. While looking at him during the long hunt I had not focused on his horns, and as I mentioned I had no real idea of his size as I have no experience in judging these animals. Johan looked at me and the bull and said, "Mouso Buffel"...as well as a few other things I can't print! Ronnie and the boys came running up and we all celebrated. He was old, broomed off and very heavy in the horn all the way through. His bosses were massive. What a trophy.

Johan left to get the bakkie so we could load him whole, and I was surprised when the vehicle arrived back with Hannes and Mike, Basie, Kobus ...and many other pairs of hands. In the time it took for them to arrive, Ronnie and I had run a quick measurement with his Leatherman. The bull was 47-plus inches wide and had 17.5-inch bosses. Unbelievable.



PH Johan Hermann, myself and PH Hannes Els

Mike and I sat together next to him, and for both of us it was a very special moment. We were living the dream. For me to take such a great bull and to have Mike with me was the summit of our long friendship and time together hunting all over the world. We loaded the bull ...easier said than done...and headed back to camp.

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After a nice lunch and a few beers to celebrate, Johan and Hannes got our feet firmly back on the ground by announcing it was time to go hunting again!! In addition to two buffalo, we both had kudu, nyala, impala and waterbuck on permit, and so off we went to see what we could find. Mike and Hannes were still concentrating on a dagga boy though.

Although I was still buzzing from the morning and had a constant video of the final stalk on my bull playing in my mind, the afternoon hunt was amazing. We saw at least 50 elephant. No big bulls but seeing so many of these majestic creatures in the wild was spine tingling. 14 more species were to make my mental video that afternoon in this wildlife paradise: giraffe, impala, nyala, Sharps grysbok, klipspringer, duiker, waterbuck, kudu, hippo, crocodile, buffalo, jackal, bushbuck and steenbok.

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In truth, we were not paying too much attention when a lone kudu bull was spotted. Johan and I stalked him for a few hundred meters, but it was soon reinforced that in Africa you usually only get one short chance to shoot on any animal. He was too smart for us, and I remember seeing long wide horns disappear into the Mopani. We were not too bothered and called it a day.

We arrived back at camp just as the sun was setting. I had a tear in my eye when Hannes said grace. We had a great dinner and celebration with the team. For the whole team this was the first buffalo killed on this concession, and it was important for many different reasons.

We talked about our day around the camp fire. Mike and Hannes had seen many bulls in the 40- to 44-inch range but had not been able to get into a position to shoot. ....No, that is no typo or exaggeration, and I know it sounds unbelievable, but the genetics are fantastic in this area. Several drinks later saw us hit our beds and close the shutters on a day that I will remember forever.

The standard routine for the rest of the hunt was to get up at around 5 am, have a coffee and quick snack before departing camp at dawn. We would hunt until around midday before returning to camp for a good lunch and then head out again about 3 pm to hunt until dark. Day 2 saw Johan, Ronnie, the boys and I out looking for one of the plains game on my permit and Mike's team continuing on the buffalo trail. We saw 10 or 12 nice kudu bulls all around the 48- to 50-inch mark....not what we were looking for, four nice waterbuck bulls (none of which Johan thought were good enough) and a beautiful nyala bull around 28 inches that was too smart for us. He also had a smaller bull around 24 inches with him. I did not have a bushbuck on permit but we saw a great specimen that Johan thought was at least 16 inches as well as two or three mature but smaller bucks.

Mid morning we cut some fresh spoor of a herd of six or seven dagga boys. We followed them up and after an hour and a half, found them sleeping. We stalked in very carefully and glassed them from 30 meters. Awesome. This was what it was all about and what we had come for. There was a beautiful bull around 42 inches in the group that was a definite shooter; however, we were never going to take him and soon afterwards the wind shifted and they busted out. Oh yeah!!

As we were getting close to camp with about an hour of light left, we spotted a herd of buffalo. Stalking in to check them out they started to move off slowly after seeing us. The wind was good and they were not too bothered. The herd stopped about 100 meters from us on a slight rise, which gave us a good view as they casually milled around with some looking in our direction. Johan and I were standing together glassing when we both noticed eight or ten bulls on the far right of the herd. Johan thought they were probably not part of the herd but were just on the fringes trailing it. What a sight this was. There must have been 150 buffalo in the group. "Look at that bull on the left....Look at that one near the termite mound.....That's a nice bull there on the right...Young bull soft bosses in the middle....good bull next to him....."

There were at least eight bulls in the herd around or over the 40-inch mark. One particular young bull with a soft boss was huge...over 46 inches, maybe 48. Two bulls clearly stood out as shooters. The first Johan thought was around 41 to 42 inches....hard shiny bosses...broomed off and old. The second was a cracker...we thought he was 43 to 44 inches with high, heavy bosses and deep curls. A buffalo any "normal" hunter would shoot in a heartbeat. We decided to leave them undisturbed and let Mike know where they were in the hope he could get onto this bull.

Returning to camp there was not much light left, but Johan and Hannes were confident they could pick up this herd's tracks in the morning and they would not move far overnight. Mike and Hannes had had a long day in the field seeing many quality dagga boys but not the big one they were looking for. I had set the bar pretty high!!

Day three dawned and it was Basie's birthday (and also my mothers). Natasha whispered in my ear before leaving camp that it would be great if I killed something so we had camp meat and could celebrate his birthday in style. Despite being one of the most one-eyed springbok supporters I have ever met, and not shy about letting me know what he thought about the wallabies, this man Basie was a great guy. Leaving camp to the tune of Basie singing, "Watch me wallabies bleed mate, watch me wallabies bleed," I hoped I could fulfill Natasha's wishes.

After concentrating on plains game on day two, we were back buffalo hunting in earnest ....but of course

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would take whatever the hunting gods offered. We spotted a herd of impala with a good ram in it. Perfect camp meat. Although Johan was not very interested in hunting impala, I managed to convince him that I was and we commenced a stalk.

I was on the sticks and ready to shoot when the ram gave me a chance from about 120 meters, and I took him cleanly through the shoulder. He managed to run 10 meters even after being whacked with the .416...man these African animals are tough.



*Impala*

Continuing on we found fresh buffalo spoor only a short distance down the road and followed it up. After about an hour we caught up to them. They had done a full 180 degrees and were halfway across the river going back into Kruger Park. The open space gave us a chance to glass them in the river bed and going up the bank on other side. What we saw made us all look in wonder. It's hard to judge when the bulls are going away and don't look straight at you, but we were all pretty sure we had seen our first 50-inch buffalo. There were two huge bulls in the herd, but one was a true monster. Johan and Ronnie were certain that my shot from the impala had spooked them. That's hunting!

After stopping in a shady spot on the river for lunch we moved on. We spotted three kudu bulls, one of which Johan wanted me to shoot. Once again they outsmarted us, but we were having too much fun! Five minutes later, we spotted another kudu bull. There was no hesitation from anyone; this was a bull we should try to kill.

We commenced our stalk and quickly closed the gap to about 100 meters, but he was onto us. Johan got me set up on the sticks and said the bull was going to come from left to right at about 120 meters. Sure enough, he walked up a small draw ...thankfully not running...and Johan whistled. He stopped, looked and I dropped him right there where he stood with a shoulder shot. The boys thought that was great, and we all celebrated.

He looked huge lying on the ground.. more than anything I could see how wide he was. As we approached him, we realized what an amazing bull he was. The photos tell the story, but he was old, heavy, 51 inches long and 50 inches from tip to tip. What a bull. Needless to say we were all ecstatic. We had a lot of fun in the photo session.



*Johan, Million and Thomas and my Kudu.*

We decided to call it a day and returned to camp. It was about 4:30 pm, and I had a cold Castle with Johan and Ronnie, and we sat relaxing talking about our day. I took the chance for an early shower and had a head full of shampoo when Johan called me and told me to get dressed quickly. I did a quick change act, grabbed my rifle and came out to be greeted by Mike and Hannes. They were coming back to camp and had seen a nice nyala bull about five minutes from camp. Mike had already taken a big bull with Hannes a year earlier and he was quick to say, "Lets go get, Steve".

Sure enough we found the bull exactly where they said, and Hannes talked me through the shot while the bull was facing us from about 50 meters. The A Frame took him square in the chest, and he ran about 30 meters before toppling over. This was the nyala of a lifetime. He was so old he had worn the ridges down from his horns. He had beautiful ivory tips and that great shape that only mature nyala bulls get.

I shook Mike's hand and gave him a hug. It was pretty dark and just as well because I was very emotional. This was a gift from him and the full body mount will take pride of place in my trophy room. He turned out to be just about perfectly even and the tape ran to 30 inches. I am not sure I will ever have another day like this in my life.

Mike had hunted hard again all day for buffalo. They had started the day by finding the herd that Johan and I had glassed the night before but unfortunately never saw the big bull with high bosses that we had seen. On another occasion they had been perfectly set up with a bull that they had decided to take which was asleep with another three bulls under a tree. Mike was in a sitting position and on the sticks. They were waiting for the bulls to wake up and stand up when for no apparent reason; they jumped straight up and bolted giving no chance of a shot. Maybe the wind shifted. These animals are not easy to hunt, but Mike was having a ball despite not having fired a shot....yet. One thing we were both sure of...there were no shortage of very big bulls here, and it was just a matter of time and having that bit luck that enables you to get a shot in.

Dinner was buffalo fillet washed down with some great South African red wine. We celebrated Basie's birthday and it was another day to remember.



*Nyala*

Johan and Ronnie wanted to climb high onto a kopje first thing in the morning to glass a series of valleys. We got up on the kopje just after first light, and as I was glassing I was amazed to see a leopard watching me from another kopje about 300 meters away. I only got to look at it for about 10 seconds before it slinked off into the rocks, but I will never forget the sight of that beautiful cat, my first leopard sighting, in the half-light.

Sure enough we spotted some buffalo a couple of kilometers away and went after them. This was to be the start of a long day on foot. When we first got up to the group, the country was much thicker on the ground than appeared from the kopje. Visibility was about 40 meters and very thick with virtually no chance for trophy evaluation or indeed a shooting lane. Johan decided to bump the herd in the hope we would get a look at them.

We did get enough of a look to see a nice bull. He had a very hard boss, was broomed off and had broken his tip on his right side. We immediately knew this was exactly the type of trophy we were looking for. Well, we hunted him hard!! For the next six hours, we tracked him, and I had him in the scope at least three times at distances between 80 and 120 meters. But every time I had no shot on his vitals as it was covered by either another bull (one of his askaris) or some scrub.

Johan was amazed at the cunning of this bull. On one occasion, we had every animal in the herd broadside at 120 meters in the clear looking at us...except him...he would never stop for long...and was always at the front of the herd.

It was getting dark and we had been on him all day when we finally gave up. We were both totally spent. Our respect for this bull turned to sheer anger as Johan cursed him for being a coward and never facing us. I was in heaven. What a day.

Mike and Hannes had again had no luck, despite seeing a lot of good bulls. That night we had kudu fillet for dinner, which Johan did on the BBQ...or more correctly, in South African terminology, the open fire brie. Tomorrow was our last day, and it had come around all too quickly.

Our last morning arrived and I wished Mike the best. I had a good feeling about the day and desperately wanted Mike to kill a big bull. We left camp at the usual time around 5:30 am and had only gone about one kilometer from camp when the boys spotted some bulls just up ahead. Sure enough we could see two bulls off to the right, and we started our stalk. Johan and I had agreed that we would take the first old, hard bossed bull that gave us a chance. As we were close to the river, we had also agreed that Johan would follow up my first shot without hesitating. The thought of a wounded buffalo crossing into Kruger Park was not even worth considering and a chance we would not take.

We commenced our stalk. The bulls knew all was not right but did not bolt ...just moved away slowly. One stood broadside at about 60 meters, and Johan told me to take him. I was ready to fire when Johan said to wait as there were three or four more bulls behind him, and as they were not too spooked we should try to get a look at them. The bull I was about to kill was a beauty.....over 40 inches and hard bossed. Four or five other bulls off to our left (which we had only just seen) got our wind and busted over the river which made the others nervous, and they too started to move from our right to left.

We quickly repositioned running about 400 meters around the side of a small kopje as Johan thought that was where they would emerge. I got on the sticks, turned on my illuminated reticle, and pushed the safety off. Two bulls appeared about 50 meters away...just walking but on the move.

"Shoot the second bull." I settled the cross hairs and that deadly red dot on the bull's lower shoulder. "Wait...there are two more bulls coming out.....there....Shoot the last bull." I swung the crosshairs onto the last bull, which was quartering away. He noticed my movement and stopped and looked at us. I fired. The shot felt good. The bulls all shifted into top gear with "my" bull still at the back of the group of four. Johan fired a split second later and the bull noticeably turned at the shot...away from the river...yes!!!

We lost sight of him and sprinted about 100m to find him standing with one of his askaris. He was head down, rocking on his feet with blood coming from his nose and mouth. I shot him again right in the heart and he went straight down. Ronnie came running up and we all just stood there in shock. We could not believe how quickly things had happened. This quickly turned into elation at our success and we enjoyed the moment. One thing was for sure, we had woken everyone in camp up!! It was 6:10 am.

Walking up to the bull I thought he looked wide. Johan and Ronnie had a strange look on their face. My first shot was good and was a killing shot. Johan's follow up shot was a great shot...or almost! It had hit the bull right in the middle of the neck and as he was using a solid, exited as well. It had somehow missed the spine. An inch either way and it would have pole axed the bull...pretty impressive shooting with open sighted 470NE as the bull was at full run and about 70 meters away. It certainly had the desired effect and turned him.

His horns were broomed and he had a hard, flat boss that was polished smooth with age. I spent some time just touching and admiring this old warrior. Ronnie had put a mark on my shooting sticks for the measurement of the first bull, and we all were amazed when this bull was at least an inch wider. Another massive trophy lay at my feet. He would end up stretching the tape at 48-plus inches with 15-inch bosses. I was stunned.

We left the boys to start the skinning job and went back to camp for a breakfast of some wonderful kudu liver and kidneys. Thomas and Million told us later that the askari bull that was him came back after about an hour. Amazing the sense of loyalty these bulls have.



Johan, myself and Ronnie with my second bull.



We spent the rest of the day looking for a good bull in the hope that we could contact Mike and get him onto it. It was getting late in the afternoon when I got the call on my Sat phone I had been hoping for. It was Mike, and he had taken a bull.

We made our way to where they were...not far from where I had shot my first bull...and found them just as it was getting dark. Well, what a bull he was. He had an awesome hard, heavy boss that was very high. He had a deep curl and fantastic length. The photos say it all. He was 43-plus inches wide. This bull would score the highest of the three great bulls we took and will go high in the record book. To say I was happy is an understatement.

Mike proceeded to tell me the story of the hunt: They had been sitting high on a kopje and had spotted at least 10 dagga boys moving slowly and feeding. While watching them and planning their stalk, they noticed two other bulls approaching the group of 10. It was clear from a distance that these two bulls were the ones they

wanted.

While they were stalking in they heard the sound of bulls fighting. It looked as if the two old boys were not welcomed by the bachelor group. This could be a curve ball in that the group may have pushed the two other bulls away but there was no way to tell and no turning back now.

Getting into a good position, Hannes moved away from Mike to get on a termite mound to get a better view. Mike happened to glance to his left to see a bull walking in and it was only a matter of seconds before they got busted.

Mike caught Hannes's attention by hand signal, and as soon as Hannes saw the bull approaching he nodded and mouthed, "Shoot that bull !!" Mike let rip freehand, taking the bull front on. The second shot from the Blaser was only a second later and Hannes was later to say he could not believe it was Mike shooting again so fast.

Hannes, who was carrying Mikes .470NE let drive missing with the first barrel but connecting with the second ...in the ass...but enough to turn the bull. Mike gave it to him again and down he went.

You could not hope for better company in the bush. Johan and Ronnie and I developed a very strong bond and friendship. Mike and Hannes reinforced an already strong relationship. Basie and Kobus run a great camp and Natasha somehow managed to bring a soft feminine touch despite all the testosterone and bravado that boils over in such a "boys own" environment. Her cooking was something to write home about. These gentlemen and Natasha are without doubt amongst the finest PH's and people Mike and I have ever had the pleasure to meet.

Make no mistake; this is a buffalo hunting paradise. The quality and numbers of trophy bulls is nothing short of amazing. It is challenging hunting and will involve long days walking and tracking in difficult conditions. These old bulls don't get that way by being dumb. Every day we saw huge numbers of elephant. Some days, we saw as many as 150. A couple of nice bulls were seen in the 40- to 50-pound range, and Johan has seen some true monsters. He will have elephant tags for this concession. This would be a fantastic spot to take the family. Mike and I will return as often as we can. This buffalo hunting is highly addictive.



*Mike and his awesome dagga boy.*



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**Aaron Neilson**  
one of us

Posted 09 August 2009 18:34

HUNTER: Aaron Neilson - Global Hunting Resources

HUNT LOCATION: S.A. - NEWLY OPENED Mthimkulu Community Concession/Limpopo Province

OUTFITTER/PH: Rigby Big Game Safaris

HUNT DATES: July 21-30, 2009

SPECIES HUNTED: Buffalo/Waterbuck

WEAPONS: .350 Rem Mag w/225 gr. Barnes Triple Shock & .375 RUM w/270 gr. Barnes Triple Shock/banded solid

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS: Fly into Phalaborwa, S.A. from Denver, Co. - Gracy Travel International - Shawn Kennedy

In early 2009 I was introduced to Johan Hermann of Rigby Big Game Safaris at a local SCI show in Detroit. I had recently heard of Johan's newly opened Mthimkulu concession in the Limpopo Province, and the success he had in late 2008 on the couple buffalo and elephant hunts he was allowed to do at the end of the year. Johan was given 3 buffalo and 1 elephant in November 2008 as a trial run by the community leaders and needless to say, things went great! He and his clients shot 3 buffalo going 43", 47" & 48", plus a 70lb jumbo in just a couple weeks of hunting! A friend of mine was familiar with one of the hunters and his success with Johan, so at Detroit, Johan and I formulated a plan for the 2009 season.

In January 2009, Rigby Big Game Safaris was granted the entire hunting rights to the 22,000 acre community concession. This to include 20 buffalo & 10 trophy elephant as the 2009 quota. A couple of plains game animals were added too, impala, waterbuck, nyala, bushbuck, etc. However, the Mthimkulu is mainly a BIG GAME area, and Johan intends on keeping it that way. Together we set out to fill the hunts, and of course I planned a hunt for myself in late July. Despite having only some good references in hand, and a little trust in Johan, I did manage to get several clients lined out for the 2009 season.

First was to be GHR's client, Brian Austin from Texas! Brian was interested mainly in a Big Jumbo, even though I told him several times to get a buffalo as well, he insisted on sticking with a 10-day elephant hunt. Brian's hunt was scheduled in mid-May, and the anticipation as my first client of the year was nerve-racking to say the least! However upon his return, all possible concerns were completely put to rest!! Not only did Brian shoot a 68lb. bull, he deeply regretted not have

a buffalo tag in hand too! He told me that he had never seen so many big buffalo, and could have easily shot a 40" plus bull from the truck, every single day! So, needless to say I was now feeling pretty good about the remaining 2009 hunts! Pictured below is his bull.



Then in mid June 2009, my first two buffalo clients of the year were scheduled for a 10-day, 2on1 hunt with Johan as the guide! By day 3 both had shot excellent buffalo, and were searching for something else to do. Johan still had a trophy elephant on license, and an additional buff, so they made a plan! By day 9, they had shot 3 big buffalo of 40" - 43", and one jumbo of 60lbs. Dave Duncan was one of the clients, below is a quote from him that he e-mailed to me upon his return.

"Aaron The quality & number of Buffalo was unbelievable. The concession is World Class for Buffalo & Elephant. The camp, equipment & help was just right.

Johan is a 10+, very professional, a real people person & a joy to be around. Jeff shot a hard boss, deep curled 40 inch bull the first day & a super heavy 43 inch bull the 9th day. I shot a 40+ inch bull with a very large boss, extremely deep curls, with long points turning back, exactly what I had hoped for. I also shot a 60 lb. elephant & we were close & personal with several large bulls over 100 lbs. You can not over sell this hunt. We have 800+ pics, it will take several days to sort through them & send on to you. Thanks Dave"

Pictured below are the trophies from Dave & Jeff's hunt.









Next came Mike Bean from Omaha, NE. Mike was on a 7-day, 1on1 buffalo hunt scheduled to end just 2 days before I arrived. Mike and I missed each other in transit, so I didn't talk to him until I got home! He did however have nothing but good news, telling me how excited he was about his 42" buff, and wanting to plan his return. Unfortunately I do not yet have a picture of his buffalo, other than the pictures I took of ALL the trophies from the skinning shed, which I will show you later!

Finally it was my turn! I arrived on July 20th into Phalaborwa, along with my cameraman, client Pete Schweitzer from Florida, and client & friend, Steve Scott! Steve and I were scheduled to hunt together on a 10-day, 2on1 hunt, and Pete was scheduled to hunt 7-days, 1on1. Steve had two cameramen with him as well, so in total we had 6 guys, making the accommodations a bit tight, but we all made it work. Steve and I were each filming the hunts for TV, so both of us would have a cameraman along, and the 3rd would film Pete's hunt! Of course my guns showed up, but my luggage didn't! Not a big deal, my luggage only

contained all my clothes, and the much needed AMMO for my gun! So needless to say, the first day of hunting was gonna be all Steve's!!!

Day 1: Steve had originally brought a .460 S&W handgun to try for the PAC elephants we would go after if the opportunity came available while we were there! He decided to head out that morning toting the hand gun, and I would carry his Blaser .416 Rem Mag for him, just in case. Not 45 minutes into the hunt we run straight into a herd of about 75 buffalo, and we instantly saw a couple of monsters. As they turn and walk away, we make a plan and head after them. Over the next 2 hrs, we saw a couple of the BIGGEST buffalo I had ever seen in my life! One was a 43" monster with DEEP drops, HUGE curls, and bosses to match! Unfortunately the handgun made it a bit tougher to get one of these big bulls, but with a rifle they were duck soup! After 3 attempts to get close enough with the pistol, they finally spooked good and that was that!

Day 2-4: My bag arrived late on day one, so now Steve and I would take turns alternating as to who would shoot first. Over the next 3 days we saw a couple hundred buffalo, and again some exceptional bulls, but seeing them, and shooting them on FILM, is a whole different story. Several times we had big bulls that we wanted but either we couldn't get a clear shot, the cameraman couldn't quite get him on film in time, or we would lose them in the mass of black feeding through the scrub. Frustrating to say the least, but that's hunting!

Pete Schweitzer on the other hand was getting into loads of big bulls, but his criteria was pretty high. He was only willing to shoot a 45" bull or bigger! Johan had been guiding him for the first 4-5 days, and although he enjoyed Pete's company, as did we all. According to Johan, some of the bulls they passed on were truly unbelievable. I can attest to that, because I have seen the footage!!

Day 5: Today was scheduled to be Steve's morning to shoot, and guide Jeff had another little spot he wanted us to check out! By 8am we were on a heard of about 50 animals, and looking for the big one! Within about 30 minutes of sneaking in and around the herd we located a very good bull of about 42" wide. He didn't have exceptionally deep drops, but was wide, and had excellent bosses. As we jockeyed for a position to shoot and get it on film, suddenly my cameraman Richard Sanchez said, "Hey, what about that one"? Holy SHIT, I thought as I look at the beast! This bull was truly a monster, at least 43" wide, with MASSIVE bosses, and very good curls! So as I tried to get Jeff's attention, Steve was waiting to shoot, and we were all flopping around like a bunch of morons! This clearly shows the difficulty in getting 2 cameramen, the guide, the hunter and the other "guide", all on the same page, at the same time! Needless to say, we couldn't make it happen. We continued following the herd for another 45 minutes, and kept looking for the huge bull. Finally the buffalo started to lay down for the day, and we were pinned down by the dozen or so animals we had right in front of us. The original 42" bull we had spotted at first was about 80 yards away, but Steve wanted the bull we found just to his right! Now, this wasn't the MONSTER, but he was what Steve really wanted! A bull he called, Darth Vader. One with deep drops, big curls, and big bosses. So I crawled about 10 yards to the left, told the guys they could get a clear shot from there, and got the sticks set up as Steve and Jeff slid over to my position! As we stood to get a clear shot, the bull Steve was after did the same! The buff turned quartering towards us, and Steve dropped him in his tracks! Since the first day's frustrations with the handgun, Steve had gone back to the Blaser, and it did the job nicely! See pic below.



Day 6-7: By the end of day 7, my client Pete was leaving without a bull, but ready to come back in 2010. He truly had passed some huge bulls, in fact some bulls that I wish I had seen with a gun in my hand! I too saw a bunch more buffalo, but not what I wanted, at least not on our side of the river. One of the Letaba rivers was the concession boundary, and frustration was the word, when you would see some of these big bulls standing just a short distance out of reach! The only thing separating them from us was a mostly dry river bed, with spotty water pools, and an imaginary line that we couldn't cross!! Here's a picture showing an example of bulls in the safety zone.



Day 8: By now I had seen literally hundreds of buffalo, and honestly more bulls than I can remember over the 40" mark! The afternoon found us close to a herd of about 100 animals, approaching them from the left! As we got within 70-80 yards I immediately spotted 2 bulls, and one that I knew for sure I wanted!!! Johan was now my guide, and I was trying to show him and the cameraman the one I was talking about before he disappeared into the abyss. By the time they could both see him, the bull was mostly obscured making the video, very poor! I passed on the shot, but not without much frustration. As the herd continued to move, about 20 buffalo fed closer to us, and again pinned us down in the open. We completely lost sight of the big bull I wanted, but we knew he was staying close to the front-left part of the pack. Finally, we were able to move another 40-50 yards forward and again saw the big bull. This time however we could see only half of his head, and nothing more. About that time another good bull, probably 41" with good bosses and curls, stepped out to the left of the big bull in a perfect shooting and filming lane, but looking right at us. I think frustration had gotten the best of us as Johan leaned over and said, "Aaron that too is a good bull, you can shoot him if you want". Honestly, I hesitated for just a minute, then said "OK". Now I needed to move out of the way of the cameraman, get back

on the bull and shoot! Just as I was ready to pull the trigger, he moved. Then 30 seconds later, he came back into the same lane but only for 2 seconds. Just as I leveled the crosshairs again, off he went!! Now, you just gotta see the film! I turned to the camera and said, "man, this is turning into a total goat rope". Then I turned around, looked back down the shooting lane, and there he stood!! "That's him, that's the big one, I hissed to Johan." Richard said take him, I got him, so I fired the shot. He was quartering at us, a perfect shot opportunity, but it happened so fast that as he ran off, I questioned myself as to whether or not I put it in the right place? Thirty seconds later we could hear the death moan, leaving little doubt as to the outcome. I knew he was big, but I was thrilled to death as we approached the bull and got a good look! He measured 44" across the spread, by far the biggest of the 9 buffalo I had shot to date!



Pictured below is a photo of my bull as we took them out of the skinning shed.



Day 9-10: Had us finishing up the filming needs, and looking at more big bulls, wishing I had another tag for something like this.



On day 10 we took all the buffalo shot to date, put them on the lawn and took a picture! I had never seen so many big buffalo all sitting together at one time, it was amazing!



After spending 10 days hunting this area, and seeing hundreds of buffalo and easily 30-40 bulls over 40". I am thoroughly convinced this is ONE of the single best places on the African continent for big buffalo & elephant. I spoke with Johan just yesterday, they shot two more big bulls since I left a week ago, one going 45". To date, all 6 ELEPHANT bulls they have shot have gone over 60lbs, and I expect the remaining 4 will be the same! The area is NOT subject to migration dependency, or other contributing factors that sometimes make the area void of game. Although you are occasionally frustrated by the game on the other side of the river scenario, there are plenty within the communal hunting area as well. These animals are truly wild, and can come and go as they please! I just can't imagine wild buffalo and elephant hunting getting any better than this!!!

Accommodations too were very good, and in fact if just the usual 2 clients are in camp, the rooms are actually very nice. FOOD was top notch, to say the least. Every single night we had steaks, pork chops, wild game, etc, etc. That was awesome for me, as I am a REAL meat guy!! Getting to Mthimkulu was extremely

easy, requiring only a short 55 minute commercial flight from Joberg to Phalaborwa. No expensive charters are necessary, no tetsee flies to put with, good weather, and very little chance of Malaria. Local cell phone service can be had at some points in the hunting area, making communication easy, but of course I brought my SAT phone too. Kruger park is a short drive, allowing additional activities for the hunter or his family. Overall, just a REALLY GOOD PLACE!!

Lastly, and most importantly! Just before I left Johan made a huge addition to the Mthimkulu hunting concession! The adjoining community consisting of 200,000 additional acres has granted him the hunting lease! Adding 14 buffalo and 4 elephants to his current quota, and allowing a previously TOTALLY un-spoiled, and NEVER-BEFORE hunted area, to be open! With the addition of another 200,000 acres, Johan has everything he could possibly want, and an unlimited supply of big buffalo & elephant! I too saw the game in this area, unbelievable to say the least!!

On a side note, here is a photo of the 30" waterbuck I shot too!



GLOBAL HUNTING RESOURCES has signed a deal with RIGBY BIG GAME SAFARIS as the exclusive booking agent for all the hunts. Now with the addition of the new area, we have additional quota available for 2009 - March 2010. We will offer these hunts at the same 2009 discounted prices. Guys, I know this is a HUNT REPORT, but this is the opportunity to hunt an area and game that have never been hunted before, EVER!! I think Johan will shoot a 50" buffalo before long, I really believe that. If you are interested contact me asap, and I plan to put an ad on the Discount Hunt page within 24 hrs too! globalhunts@aol.com

I have another buffalo hunter going in about 2 weeks, and I will be HAPPY to provide contact info for my clients that have already hunted here in the past couple months. Just talk to Pete Schweitzer, he did not shoot a bull, but said it was the most incredible place he has been!!

Thanks for reading this report, hope it was informative!!

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Posts: **702** | Location: **Littleton, Colorado** | Registered: **05 March 2009**



**Wink**  
one of us

Posted 09 August 2009 19:08

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What a great collection of buffalo. I love the super downsweep on the horns. Must be a great area.

Just one damn fact after another.

Posts: **4606** | Location: **Rambouillet, France** | Registered: **25 June 2004**



**DLS**  
one of us

Posted 09 August 2009 20:30

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Fantastic report, sounds like a great area.

The only question I have is how can they sustain this level of quality on such a relatively small area? That many buffalo on an area this small isn't sustainable, and especially not that many elephants. So, I presume they're shooting these animals as surplus that wander off the 'neighbor,' is that correct?

\*\*\*\*\*

Our Presidential administration, and liberals in general, are proof that a higher education does not equal greater intelligence. They are proof that these can be mutually exclusive concepts.

Posts: **999** | Location: **California** | Registered: **01 January 2009**



**kibokolambogo**  
one of us

Posted 09 August 2009 20:54

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quote:

Originally posted by CAelknuts:  
Fantastic report, sounds like a great area.

The only question I have is how can they sustain this level of quality on such a relatively small area? That many buffalo on an area this small isn't sustainable, and especially not that many elephants. So, I presume they're shooting these animals as surplus that wander off the 'neighbor,' is that correct?

"We were close & personal with several large bulls over 100 lbs." but the 6 elephants shot to date range between 60-70 lbs. - surely the PH must know what class of elephant are present in the area or is there a surcharge for anything over 70lbs?

Posts: **241** | Location: **Tanzania** | Registered: **19 March 2009**



**Aaron Neilson**  
one of us



Posted 09 August 2009 21:20

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CAelknuts - Honestly, I was worried about the same thing, but not after being there!!! Plus, he has added the neighboring 200,000 acres, so now they are hunting 222,000 acres! Explaining it is difficult, you have to see it to believe it! The quality of both buffalo & elephant will remain for a long, long time!

Kibokolambogo - Johan is NOT allowed to shoot anything over 70lbs, even though they are present! We make that VERY clear to hunters, but he did have a problem 2 months ago with a SA hunter who was required to pass a 120lb bull! I understand the hunter's frustration, but the rules are established from the get-go.

Aaron

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Posts: **702** | Location: **Littleton, Colorado** | Registered: **05 March 2009**



**James Cardwell**  
one of us



Posted 09 August 2009 21:58

[Hide Post](#)

Aaron, PM sent.

Posts: **227** | Location: **Palo Pinto Mountains** | Registered: **26 March 2006**



**Sevenxbjt**  
one of us



Posted 09 August 2009 22:27

[Hide Post](#)

Sorry, I have to ask a dumb question. Why can't one shoot one of the 100 pounders? I understand it may be quite pricey, but if the terms are agreeable, what else is the hold up? Are the 100 pounders being saved to pass on these genetics? I always assumed the big tusks like that were on old bulls past their prime anyhow. I've never hunted elephant so I'm sure these questions seem naive, just curious.

Justin

Posts: **1186** | Location: **California cowranch in the foothills** | Registered: **12 May 2009**



**Aaron Neilson**  
one of us



Posted 09 August 2009 23:09

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Sevenxbjt - Not a stupid question at all, and honestly price has nothing to do with it! The "political" pressure amongst the NON-hunting community is just too great! The outfitter has been asked NOT to shoot the huge bulls that occasionally frequent the hunting areas! They are seen as National Treasures, etc, etc, and it would just bring way more scrutiny that one needs. Doing so could seriously

jeopardize his future hunting rights, so he chooses to honor the request.

Aaron

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Posts: **702** | Location: **Littleton, Colorado** | Registered: **05 March 2009**



**kibokolambogo**  
one of us



Posted 09 August 2009 23:14

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quote:

Originally posted by Aaron Neilson:  
CAelknuts - Honestly, I was worried about the same thing, but not after being there!!! Plus, he has added the neighboring 200,000 acres, so now they are hunting 222,000 acres! Explaining it is difficult, you have to see it to believe it! The quality of both buffalo & elephant will remain for a long, long time!

Kibokolambogo - Johan is NOT allowed to shoot anything over 70lbs, even though they are present! We make that VERY clear to hunters, but he did have a problem 2 months ago with a SA hunter who was required to pass a 120lb bull! I understand the hunter's frustration, but the rules are established from the get-go.

Aaron

I failed to read the bit that limited the weight to 70 lbs. - just 10 trophy elephants.

Guess one cannot argue over set rules but would have thought anything over a certain age and I quote: "Very old bulls, ponderous hulks with the largest tusks are the most sedentary, they end their days in swamps where they can still consume quantities of herbage as their last molars wear out" fall into the category of a true trophy elephant.

A 70 lbs. elephant is in its prime breeding stage.

Posts: **241** | Location: **Tanzania** | Registered: **19 March 2009**



**DLS**  
one of us



Posted 09 August 2009 23:34

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So, given the size of the elephant bulls, I'm assuming these are Kruger Park bulls. I'd hate to think that someone might want to shoot Hlanganini if he wandered over there.

\*\*\*\*\*

Our Presidential administration, and liberals in general, are proof that a higher education does not equal greater intelligence. They are proof that these can be mutually exclusive concepts.

Posts: **999** | Location: **California** | Registered: **01 January 2009**



**Aaron Neilson**  
one of us




Posted 09 August 2009 23:48

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Yes, it's unfortunate the VERY big bulls are not available, but they're not!

Aaron Neilson

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Posts: <b>702</b>   Location: <b>Littleton, Colorado</b>   Registered: <b>05 March 2009</b>	
	
<div><b>Dentist</b> one of us</div> 	<div> Posted 09 August 2009 23:49</div> <div><a href="#">Hide Post</a></div> <div>Congratulation to you and your clients!</div> <div>Very nice trophies!</div> <div>To pass a 120 pounder would kill me.</div>
Posts: <b>105</b>   Registered: <b>12 August 2008</b>	
	
<div><b>Aaron Neilson</b> one of us</div>	<div> Posted 10 August 2009 00:42</div> <div><a href="#">Hide Post</a></div> <div>Dentist - I'm just glad I didn't see one of those. I'm sure I would have been in BIG trouble!</div> <div>Aaron Neilson Global Hunting Resources <a href="http://www.globalhuntingresources.com">www.globalhuntingresources.com</a> globalhunts@aol.com 303-932-0550 - office</div>
Posts: <b>702</b>   Location: <b>Littleton, Colorado</b>   Registered: <b>05 March 2009</b>	
	
<div><b>Sevenxbjt</b> one of us</div> 	<div> Posted 10 August 2009 04:57</div> <div><a href="#">Hide Post</a></div> <div>Aaron, Thanks for clearing up the weight restrictions. I hope you have success acquiring the additional lands. Sounds like it would be a great place for first dg hunt.</div> <div>Justin</div>
Posts: <b>1186</b>   Location: <b>California cowranch in the foothills</b>   Registered: <b>12 May 2009</b>	
	
<div><b>Aaron Neilson</b> one of us</div>	<div> Posted 10 August 2009 16:45</div> <div><a href="#">Hide Post</a></div> <div>Sevenxbjt - The outfitter has actually acquired the NEW lease already, so no it's just a matter of getting some of the quota sold. Yes, we expect it to be an excellent DG hunt in a place that has not been previously hunted.</div> <div>Aaron  Aaron Neilson Global Hunting Resources <a href="http://www.globalhuntingresources.com">www.globalhuntingresources.com</a> globalhunts@aol.com 303-932-0550 - office</div>
Posts: <b>702</b>   Location: <b>Littleton, Colorado</b>   Registered: <b>05 March 2009</b>	
	
<div><b>Use Enough Gun</b> one of us</div>	<div> Posted 10 August 2009 22:00</div> <div><a href="#">Hide Post</a></div> <div>Outstanding!</div>

	<div>Posts: <b>4761</b>   Registered: <b>04 April 2005</b></div> <div></div>
<div><b>matt u</b> one of us</div> 	<div><div>Posted 10 August 2009 22:08</div><div><a href="#">Hide Post</a></div></div> <div>Super Buffalo.Aaron congratulations  </div> <div>Posts: <b>532</b>   Location: <b>winston,georgia</b>   Registered: <b>07 July 2007</b></div> <div></div>
<div><b>Tim Herald</b> one of us</div> 	<div><div>Posted 11 August 2009 00:18</div><div><a href="#">Hide Post</a></div></div> <div>What a fantastic hunt and buff Aaron. Congrats, those bulls are amazing...</div> <div>Good Hunting,</div> <div>Tim Herald</div> <div>Posts: <b>815</b>   Location: <b>Lexington, KY</b>   Registered: <b>13 January 2005</b></div> <div></div>
<div><b>Scottyboy</b> one of us</div> 	<div><div>Posted 11 August 2009 01:15</div><div><a href="#">Hide Post</a></div></div> <div>Those are some wonderful bulls, Aaron.. both buff and ele!</div> <div>Too bad a couple of the BIG boys are off limits..</div> <div>-----</div> <div>DRSS</div> <div>Posts: <b>1003</b>   Location: <b>West Texan in Tucson, AZ</b>   Registered: <b>13 February 2006</b></div> <div></div>
<div><b>Aaron Neilson</b> one of us</div>	<div><div>Posted 11 August 2009 01:28</div><div><a href="#">Hide Post</a></div></div> <div>Thanks guys, appreciate the nice words! Tim, maybe we can get together on that Leopard hunt some day and hope it all works out for ya.</div> <div>Aaron</div> <div>Aaron Neilson Global Hunting Resources <a href="http://www.globalhuntingresources.com">www.globalhuntingresources.com</a> globalhunts@aol.com 303-932-0550 - office</div> <div>Posts: <b>702</b>   Location: <b>Littleton, Colorado</b>   Registered: <b>05 March 2009</b></div> <div></div>
<div><b>Tim Herald</b> one of us</div>	<div><div>Posted 11 August 2009 01:36</div><div><a href="#">Hide Post</a></div></div> <div>Amen Aaron...</div>



Good Hunting,

Tim Herald

---

Posts: **815** | Location: **Lexington, KY** | Registered: **13 January 2005**

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