



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

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Editors and Journalists

MALE LION DESTROYED AS PROBLEM CAUSING ANIMAL

The Ministry is concerned to note that there are individuals and groups that are keen on discrediting Namibia's conservation methods as implemented by the Ministry and its stakeholders. Such people continue to spread unfounded rumours aimed at tarnishing the image of our country with reference to our wildlife management and utilisation thereof.

Recently, on the 10th October 2023 in the Palmwag area, Kunene Region a male lion seven or eight years old was declared as a problem causing animal and destroyed for persistently killing people's livestock as per the provisions of our laws and policies. This incident is unfortunately being used by animal right groups to spread advocacy and false assumptions about the Ministry and its ability to manage human wildlife conflict.

The lion caught and killed fourteen goats in July this year before it killed a brahman bull in the area of Plamfontein. This lion was collared making it easier for the Ministry and the conservancies to monitor its movement. To this effect, various mitigation measures and interventions were put in place by the Lion Rangers to manage the conflict but to no success. Even with the presence of game in the area, the lion

continued to prey on livestock, causing serious concerns to communities and farmers in the area.

The lion was declared as a problem causing animal, and destroyed through conservation hunting. N\$20,000 from the hunt will be deposited in the Game Product Trust Fund to be used for wildlife conservation and human wildlife conflict management. A total of N\$300,000 will be paid to the affected communities through Ehirovipuka and Khoadi Hoas Conservancies, to be used for conservation as well as social and economic upliftment of the communities.

Namibia, has subscribed to conservation methods that are tailor-made to address our situations and benefit our people as per the constitutional provision. These methods have been tried and tested with tangible results in the form of wildlife population growth and recoveries. As a result, cases of human wildlife conflict increased with animals like lions, elephants and crocodiles been the main culprits as people and wildlife continued to compete for resources and space. Our laws and policies are guided by the principles of balancing the needs of conservation and the rights of the people.

Our conservation successes are aided by the fact that community members have accepted to co-exist with dangerous predators and animals that at time cause damages to their properties and in unfortunate events losses of human lives. On the basis of this we cannot afford to overlook the plight of the farmers to satisfy the emotions of animal right groups. For as much as we value tourism as an economic sector based on the revenue it generates, as responsible government we will always put the needs of our people first without compromise or fail.

We would like to bring to the attention of the public and the international community that lions occur across the entire north of Namibia and some parts of the country in the central and southern areas. Our estimated lion population in the country is seven hundred and fifty (750) with four hundred and fifty (450) in Etosha National Park, one hundred and twenty (120) in Kunene Region where this incident occurred and parts of the Erongo Region, sixty (60) in the Khaudum National Park and surrounding areas of the Kavango East Region and Otjozodjupa Region, sixty (60) in the Zambezi Region and about sixty (60) is some commercial farms.

The ability by lions to adapt to living in harsh environments such as deserts, is not genetic but through their knowledge of the terrain, high mobility and physical endurance. The lions that are commonly known as desert adapted are the same species of lions that occurs elsewhere in the country and is scientifically known as '*Panthera leo*'. Strictly speaking the concept of desert lions is a marketing gimmick which has been used to imply endangerment or eminent extinction of these lions. These lions are not at risk of extinction at all, in fact, their numbers have increased to the highest level in at least half a century over which aerial surveys were done or credible estimates were made.

Human Wildlife Conflict is a serious problem that if not addressed appropriately, treated with necessary understanding and respect, and managed effectively, has potential to reverse our conservation and tourism gains for the country. In this regard the Ministry is continuously engaged in finding lasting solutions to this phenomenon.

We call upon all tourists, visitors and all Namibians, to disregard the advocacy against our country aimed at nothing but discrediting our conservation efforts. Namibia's conservation of wildlife is sound but by no means without challenges and the Ministry works hard to address them. Tourists should come and experience the beauty of our country from its amazing landscapes, our diverse cultures, to its abundant wildlife and in this case our free roaming lions on communal land, commercial farm and National Parks.

Issued by:

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