

**A Reappraised of the Draft on Management  
of Large Predators; Department of  
Environmental Affairs & Tourism**

**North West Lion Breeders & Hunting Association**

**Compiled by Dewald F Keet**

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# **A Reappraisal of the Draft on Management of Large Predators; Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism**

**On behalf of the North-West Lion Breeders & Hunting Association**

## **Abstract**

The captive breeding and hunting of such lions (“High Fenced lions” or “Managed Hunting”) is a conservation tool as it removes some of the pressure on the selective hunting of wild lions. Provided it is executed in an ethical manner and well regulated. South Africa is the second largest source of lions for hunting on the continent and is responsible for approximately 30% of the continental off take. Approximately 80% of South Africa’s hunted lions are captive bred.

It is confirmed that the status of wild free-ranging lions in Africa is uncertain and definitely threatened by over-exploitation, agriculture, encroachment, poaching, inbreeding and disease. Large divergence exists between independent survey results and the margin of error in the results is extensive.

Safari Club International released a favourable policy report on the hunting of “Fenced Wildlife Populations” and does not condemn this practice at all.

The intricate social behaviour patterns of wild lions place them at risk of over-exploitation when unsustainable hunting quotas of a selective class of lions (namely adult males) is allocated. The demand to hunt lions will always be there and is in actual fact increasing. This demand on its own requires that more credit be given to captive breeding of lions.

The termination of the lion captive breeding and hunting industry will lead to massive losses in foreign income, job losses, decreases in the hunting of other species, taxidermy losses, redundant infrastructure and ultimately euthanasia of a large sector of the captive bred lion population.

It is not the aim of this document to imply that the hunting of free-ranging wild lions is to the detriment of the lion meta-population. It is merely to provide evidence that some subpopulations are at distinct risk of being over-exploited.

## **1. Introduction**

The African lion (*Panthera leo*) is classified as vulnerable on the Red List of Threatened Species of the World Conservation Union (IUCN); agriculture, human settlement, inbreeding, disease and poisoning are mentioned as main threats. The lion is a member of

the Family *Felidae* which is listed in appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

No other animal has attained as much admiration and respect from man as the lion. No other animal has created more fear, mystique and royal powers in the eye of man as the lion. Man is enthralled with the lion. To conquer the lion, bestows on man a feeling of power, of achievement of a higher status, and ultimately caresses his ego. Man as we know him today, would always need to satisfy this urge for recognition. There is a general believe that wild lions are dangerous and that they are the most difficult to hunt. A wild lion is very seldom a dangerous lion to hunt as the animal seldom charges (especially males) when hunted on foot in broad daylight. This is where the difficulty in the hunt come form; the continuous pursuit of the skittish lion to be hunted. But when hunted on bait at night from a hide, all requirements for a fair and ethical hunt are absent. This effective approach, to this day, remains the most important technique to hunt free-ranging lions in concession areas.

The hunting of a prime free-ranging and truly wild specimen would always be the ultimate trophy however the availability of such prime lions is noticeably decreasing while the demand is ever increasing.

It is also claimed that the hunting of captive bred, non-habituated lions in large free-ranging enclosures is a far more dangerous and challenging practice. These are lions that have lost their fear of man. These are lions that are likely to charge the hunter at first sight.

There is no evidence that lion hunting (cropping or harvesting) in large relatively naturally functioning ecosystems to suggest that lion population regulation is necessary nor effective (Smuts et al 1978a). However selective trophy hunting does have an impact purely due to disruption of the lion's intricate social behaviour patterns.

Trophy and sports hunting remains a powerful financial support system for conservation and ethical hunting provides so much more acceptability and respect of this practice (Bothma, 2002).

The lion population found in South Africa can be characterized as being the most intensively managed population in Africa. This highly interventionist approached has produced a wealth of useful information on the management of small populations and demonstrates just what can be done when there are sufficient resources and the will to carry out these projects. However, it also highlights the fact that this type of management is extremely difficult and it is better to never lose lions from an area that to try and re-introduce them having lost them in the first place, as it is unlikely that the monumental efforts that have gone into lion management in South Africa could be repeated across the continent.

It is said that hunting fraternities from all over the world is opposing the hunting of captive bred lions but evidence will be presented to prove the opposite. Where do all our

foreign hunters come from and why do they not get disqualified by their hunting associations? The broad, uninformed public was inundated with sensational publicity on the cruelty of this much needed sector of the hunting industry (Cook, Report. & Patterson, 1998). It now appears to be virtually impossible to rectify this inaccurate public perspective.

The perceived problems around the hunting of lions are not only a South African problem; it is an African problem and a continental (international) policy on the management of lions must be developed. Perhaps lion conservation *per se* must be more accentuated rather than lion hunting issues.

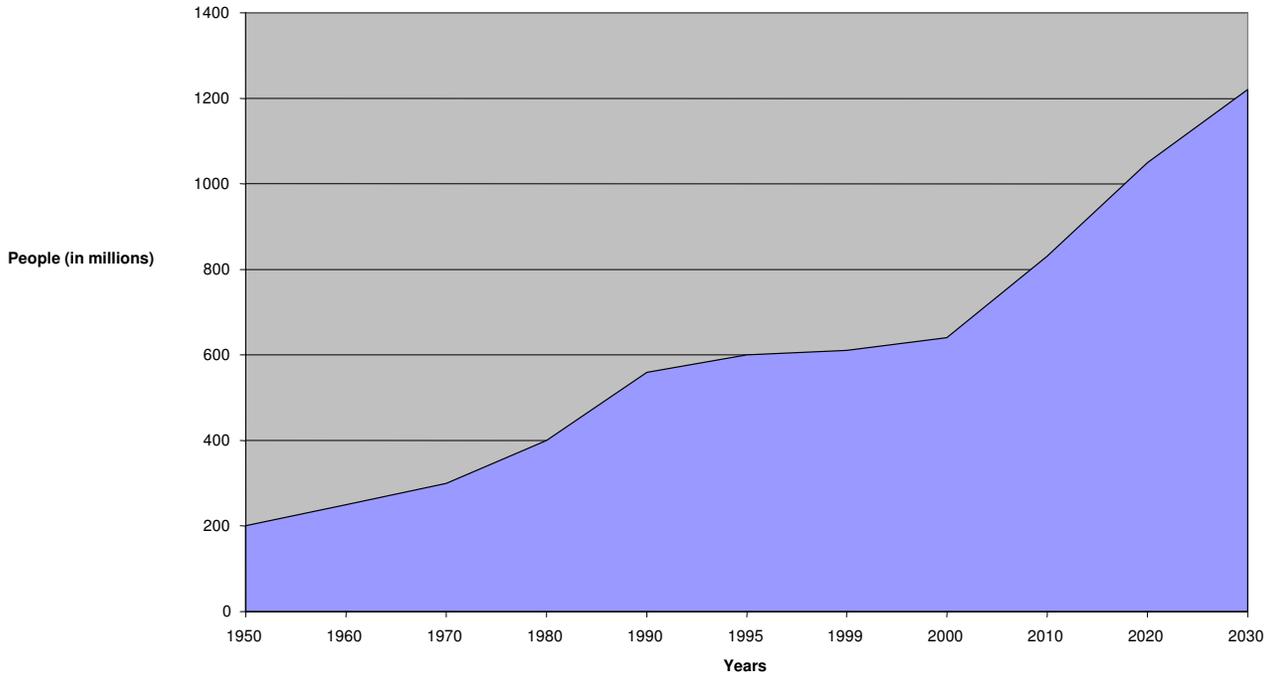
### **1.1 An ever changing Africa**

Africa is developing at an ever increasing rate. With this development comes encroachment on previously non-gazetted areas and consequent confrontation with lions that have been living in those areas.

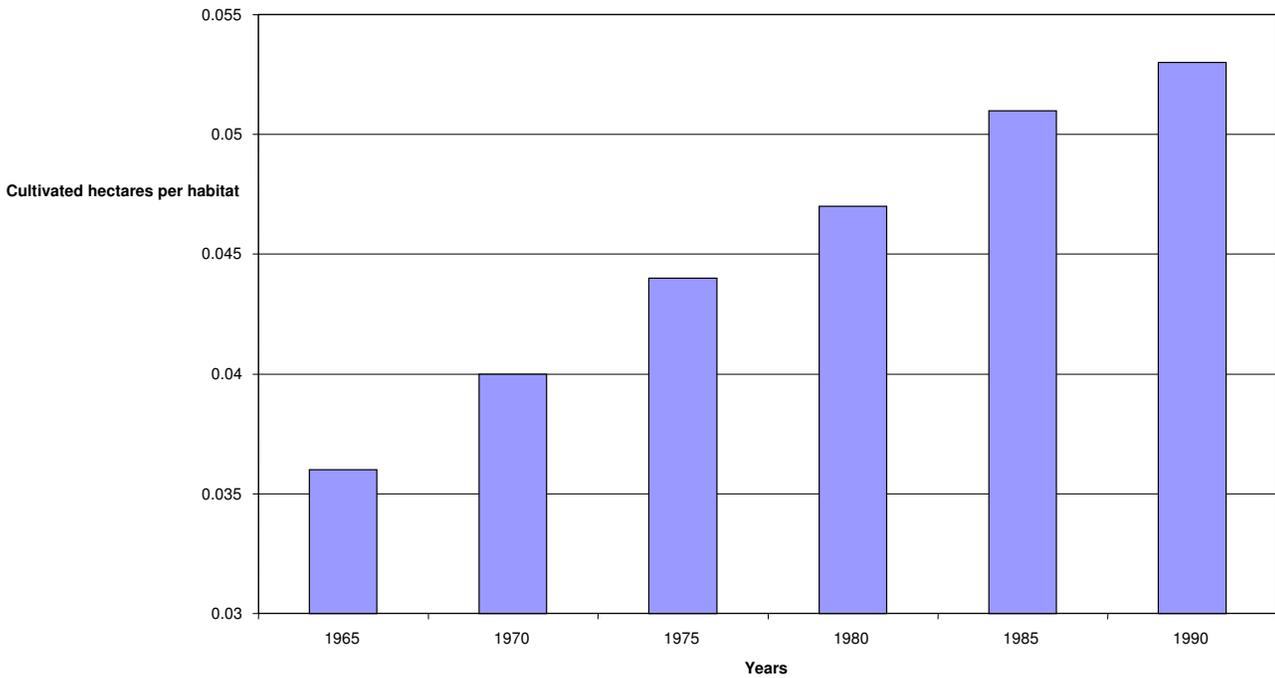
The global African lion distribution range covers about 3 million square kilometers. The distribution area of the lion covers approx. 10% of the whole continent, about 15% of Sub Saharan Africa. Of this 15%, 7% occurs in so-called non-gazetted areas in so called pastoral areas. The rest are national parks, reserves and hunting areas (Chardonnet, 2002).

With the increasing human population growth it is to be expected that more land and food is required. Sustainable utilization of natural resources under conditions like this is difficult to maintain. It is difficult to propagate conservation ideologies to protein-starved populations.

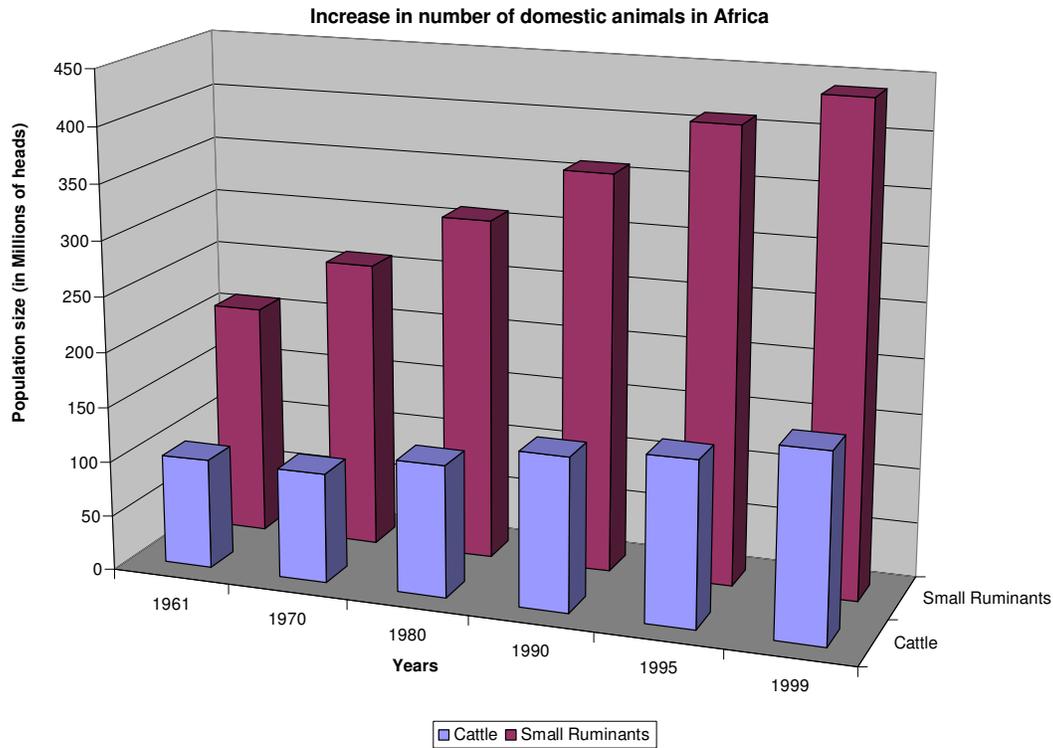
**Human population growth in Sub Saharan Africa (Source: FAO, 2001; In Tacher *et al*, 2001)**



**Rise in Cultivated land in Sub Saharan African (Source: Tacher *et al*, 2001)**



**Increase in number of domestic animals in Africa (Source: FAO, 2001; *in Tacher et al,2001*)**



## **2. Status of the African lion.**

Free-ranging and wild lions are extremely difficult to count due to their cryptic coloring and sometimes secretive and nocturnal behaviour. A lack of infrastructure and remoteness of certain areas of the African continent contributed to obscurity of assessing true figures. However reliable and knowledgeable co-workers were identified in each country or region and tasked to calculate lion numbers. Two (both dependable) different surveys were evaluated and both were significantly different from each other and lower than figures previously provided (Chardonnet, 2002, ALWG, 2002).

Until 2002 the only accepted figure was found in the latest publication of the Cat Specialist Group of the IUCN and specifically 30 000 up to 100000. It has subsequently been established that 30 000 was the more realistic of the two figures. (Chardonnet, 2002; ALWG, 2002)

South Africa has less than three thousand free-ranging lions of which only the population in the Kruger Complex can be considered as truly self-maintaining. The 200 strong Kghalagadi meta-population is part of the Botswana meta-population. All other lion populations in South Africa are too small to be self-maintaining and social and genetic intervention and manipulation is required at appropriate intervals. They are also in relatively small reserves.

Lion populations all over Africa are threatened by over exploitation, poaching, encroachment on conservation areas, inbreeding and disease. It has recently been stated by Kissui & Packer (2004) that endangered populations can remain at serious risk due to disease especially if genetic diversity is depleted with special reference to the Ngorongoro population that were only 29 in 1998.

Chardonnet (Conservation of the African Lion: Contribution to a Status Survey. September 2002. *International Foundation for the Conservation of Wildlife*. Edited by Phillip Chardonnet. Conservation Force) provided population size figures through three assessment modes which were ranked according to their reliability as follows:

***Assessment mode A***

The estimated population size is produced by total census or abundance index or density or intimate knowledge of an area including lions, prey availability, use, etc. Minimum and maximum figures were calculated with a 10 % error on the estimate.

***Assessment mode B***

The estimated population size was produced by comparison of the given population with known population in a similar ecosystem, usually in a neighbouring area. Using hunting results following a calculation of ratio may also make this comparison. Minimum and maximum figures were calculated with a 20 % error on the estimate.

***Assessment mode C***

The estimated population figures were produced by experts’ opinions usually based upon first hand information, sometimes on “guesstimates” drawn from available information. Minimum and maximum figures were calculated with a 30 % error on the estimate.

The prevalence of different assessment modes is summarized below; it becomes obvious that the error margin on the estimated numbers can be even larger if the number of C estimates is taken into account.

	West Africa		Central Africa		East Africa		Southern Africa	
A = 8    5.9%	1	4.5%	0	0%	5	8.3%	2	5.7%
B = 31   22.9%	9	40.9%	8	44.4%	7	11.7%	7	20%
C = 96   71.1%	12	54.5%	10	55.6%	48	80%	26	74.%

From this table it becomes apparent that 71.1% of wild lions in Africa could not be accurately assessed.

**Estimated lion population size in Sub Saharan Africa (From Chardonnet 2002).**

Regions	Estimated lion population size			% of estimated lions per region
	Minimum	Estimated	Maximum	
Western Africa	968	1 163	1 358	3%
Central Africa	2 092	2 815	3 538	7.2%
Eastern Africa	11 268	15 744	18 811	40%
Southern Africa	14 526	19 651	23 425	49.9%
Sub Saharan	28 854 (20515)	39 373 (27 994)	47 132 (33 510)	

This assessment mode implies that we are only sure about 5.9% up to 22.9% of lions on the African Continent!

**Estimated lion population size in Sub Saharan Africa (From African Lion Working Group, 2002)**

Regions	Estimated lion population size			% of estimated lions per region
	Minimum	Estimated	Maximum	
Western Africa	558	815	1 122	3.6%
Central Africa	418	700	1 208	3.1%
Eastern Africa	8 794	11 123	12 980	49.2%
Southern Africa	8 281	9 998	11 713	44.2%
Sub Saharan	18 051	22 636	27 023	

ALWG stated that this may be an underestimation.

**South Africa Free ranging lions according to ALWG (2002)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Estimated</b>	<b>Est. Min</b>	<b>Est. Max</b>	<b>Source</b>
Addo, Kwande & Shamwari	13	12	14	Slotow/Van Dyk (2001)
KNP Complex	2 200	2 200	2 200	Mills (2002)
HIP	120	90	150	Slotow(2002)
Phinda & Tembe	19	19	19	Hunter (2002)
Karongwe, Kapama, Sandringham, Tshukudu, Balule, Driehoek, Venice, Uhlametsi, Makalali, Tongati & Thorney Bush	161	153	169	Liversage/Sussens/Yule/Los Noord, Jones, Thomson, Nieman, Owen, Pieterse (2002)
Venetia	30	20	41	Kruger (2002)
Kgalagadi	225	200	250	Funston (2001)
Tswalu	8	8	8	Hunter (2001)
Mabula, Entabeni, Shambala, Welgevonden, Marikele	54	54	54	Slotow/Van Dyk (2001)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 830</b>	<b>2 756</b>	<b>2 905</b>	

**Fence protected areas in South Africa (According to Chardonnet, 2002).**

<b>No Sub-population</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Population size</b>		
			<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Estimated</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>36</b>	South Africa	Mpumalanga	11	13	14
		Eastern Cape	107	119	131
		Free state	450	500	550
		Gauteng	182	202	222
		Kwazulu Natal	143	159	175
		Northern Cape	19	21	23
		Northern Province	49	54	59
		North West Province	121	134	147
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1082</b>	<b>1202</b>	<b>1321</b>

Following are tables summarizing the export of live lions and lion trophies since 1991 until 2000. The vast majority of all specimens originated from East & Southern Africa; the two areas with the most lions but also the two areas with the largest margin of error on lion numbers. This may very well be a clear index that we could already be over utilizing our resources. Not one publication or one critic of “canned” lion hunting could be found that does not recognize and admit that wild lions in Africa are declining.

**EXPORT OF THE LIVE AFRICAN LIONS BY RANGE STATES BETWEEN 1991 AND 2000(Source: UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Database, 2001)**

Country	Number of live lions exported by Range States between 1991 and 2000	
	Total Number	Number taken from the wild
Ethiopia	2	-
Kenya	13	4
Malawi	6	6
Namibia	84	25
Niger	2	-
Senegal	4	-
South Africa	164	29
Tanzania	4	2
Zambia	2	2
Zimbabwe	30	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>87</b>

It remains unclear as to why 29 free-ranging wild lions were exported during this period when such a large source of captive bred lions was available. It does however confirm that South Africa does not need to import any captive bred lions and that we can be a valuable source of disease free and genetically pure breeding stock.

The exporting Ranges States of lion hunting trophies may be classified in three categories, over the ten-year period under consideration (1991-2000)(UNEP-WCMC CITES Trade Data Base, 2001)

1 <sup>st</sup> Category	2 <sup>nd</sup> Category	3 <sup>rd</sup> Category
Exported < 100 hunting Trophies	Exported between 100 and 1000 hunting trophies	Exported > 1000 hunting trophies
Mali = 0	Namibia = 188	Botswana = 1008
Niger = 0	Zambia = 368	Zimbabwe = 1078
Chad = 0		South Africa = 1990
DRC = 1		Tanzania = 2226
Sudan = 2		
Senegal = 4		
Malawi = 11		
Kenya = 12		
Benin = 13		
CAR = 20		
Burkina Faso = 34		
Ethiopia = 42		
Mozambique = 84		
Cameroon = 98		

It is clear that four countries are currently contributing significantly to the hunting of lions; Botswana, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Together with Tanzania, South Africa was responsible for approximately 60% of lions hunted per annum on the continent. South Africa hunts on average 180 (27 % of the total continental take off per annum) lions per year of which approximately 80% (144) of them are captive bred and released lions. If this apparently highly sought after sector is removed from the market, potential hunters will go and seek lions somewhere else. This may even mean luring them from conservation areas elsewhere on the sub continent – or creating so-called “Damage Causing Animals”

Just as a matter of interest, 90 incidents of luring of wild lions out of the remote northern sector of Kruger have occurred between 2001 and 2004 (Peter Scott *pers. comm.* 2005). It is not known how many of these efforts were successful but at least one known marked lion was seen as a trophy specimen in the *Man Magnum* of December 2004. Lions were also lured out of Kruger into Mozambique by a renowned SA Professional hunter during the 1990’s.

Furthermore it was established that the South African market showed a significant increase in interested hunters after the Botswana ban was instituted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2001 (ALWG, 2002). Tanzania claims a similar surge in interest (Viljoen P.C. *pers. comm.*). This phenomenon or tendency clearly indicates the consequences for wild

populations elsewhere in Africa should South Africa remove captive bred lions from the market.

The Botswana ban was recently lifted and massive interest was shown. This country had lost in excess of US\$ 10 million (Woods, 2002) up to US\$ 17.2 million (McGreal, 2001) over the past four years.

### **3. Social behaviour of free-ranging lions.**

Lions are the only cats with tufted tails and manes (males only).

The males of many polygynous species tend to develop conspicuous display features. The fact that only the lion, out of all cats, has done so suggests that the mane is closely linked to the lion's distinctive social system.

The core unit of the lion's matrilineal society is the pride, which consists of a group related females (none dominant) and their cubs (Schaller 1972, Bertram 1975a, Packer *et al.* 1991a).

Pride size (measured by the number of adult females) is smallest in very arid environments (2.2) and otherwise averages between four and six (Schaller 1972, Smuts 1976, Hanby and Bygott 1979). Pride sizes positively correlated with lean season prey abundance (van Orsdol *et al.* 1985).

Prides are "fission-fusion" social units: membership is stable, but the pride members are often scattered in small sub-groups throughout the pride's range, and each individual spends a considerable amount of time alone (Schaller 1972, Bertram 1978, Pusey and Packer 1987).

Pride members often give birth in synchrony, and the young are reared communally, with cubs suckling freely from lactating female (Schaller 1972, Bertram 1975b).

A single male or coalition of males (up to seven) holds tenure over one or more prides, and effectively excludes strange males from siring cubs with pride females (Packer *et al.* 1991a). Competition among males for pride tenure is intense, and average tenure is only two (Packer *et al.* 1988) to three years (Stander, 1991). Males will only seek tenure over or breed with related pride females under unusual circumstances (e.g. when the population is small and there are barriers to dispersal: Pusey and Packer 1987, Packer *et al.* 1991a,b). Males are also highly social; coalitions in the pre- and post-tenure periods hunt and scavenge cooperatively, and larger coalitions of 4-6 males can maintain tenure more than twice as long as 1-2 males (>47 months) (Bygott *et al.* 1979).

Despite maternal defense, infanticide is common when males take over a new pride: most females with dependent offspring lose their cubs within a month of a takeover, and those that are pregnant lose their cubs shortly after giving birth. In this way, males assure paternity during their short reproductive lifetime, which is generally only as long as their

period of pride tenure. In response, females show a burst of heightened sexual activity for about three months following a takeover, attracting other males and encouraging competition that ensures that the fittest (often largest) coalition is able to gain tenure. They remain infertile (anovulatory; Smuts *et al.* 1978) during this “testing” period, and only afterwards, when tenure has stabilized, tend to breed in synchrony (Packer & Pusey 1983). Litters born synchronously have a higher survival rate (probably due to maximal maternal care (Bertram 1975b), and tend to show a sex ratio biased towards males. This may be because groups of related males reproduce more successfully (Pusey and Packer 1987).

Reproductive success increases with coalition size (Bygott *et al.* 1979, Packer *et al.* 1988).

The question of why sociality evolved to such a high degree in lions has been the subject of considerable debate.

Lions (especially males) frequently scavenge (>40% of food items in the Serengeti: Packer *et al.* 1990).

Outside protected areas, where lions are heavily persecuted and the wild ungulate prey base is reduced, group sizes are reported to be much smaller (1-2: Thomas 1990, F. Hurst *in litt.* 1991), and they are seldom heard to roar.

Age at first reproductive: (Wild) While the onset of spermatogenesis begins at 30 months in males (Smuts *et al.* 1978), and females may begin mating at 24 months, successful first reproduction generally happens only when pride membership is established.

Males generally establish pride tenure at 4-4.5 years, with larger coalitions (4+) establishing residence earlier (Pusey and Packer 1987).

Mortality of cubs is rather high in lions, and is linked chiefly to periods of prey scarcity, when kills may be more infrequent and cubs may not be able to eat will from group-shared carcasses (Schaller 1972, van Orsdol *et al.* 1985.) Infanticide is also an important factor (Packer & Pusey 1983).

Sex Ratio: Prenatal: 1 male: 0.9 female (n = 39); adult (5+ years): 1 male: 2.1 females (Smuts 1978b).

Longevity: (Wild) males generally 12 (Hanby and Bygott 1991), and up to 16 years. (Smuts *et al.* 1978), females generally 15 – 16 (Hanby & Bygott 1991), and up to 18 years (Bertram 1975).

The lion has broad habitat tolerance, absent only from tropical rain forest and the interior of the Sahara desert.

#### ***Effect of sports hunting on free-ranging lions.***

*When territorial prime adult males are selectively hunted their coalition is destabilized. This renders the female pride and cubs that they have sired vulnerable to incoming nomadic male coalitions. Should such a nomadic coalition be successful in evicting the weakened territorial coalition, they would move in and kill cubs and/or sub adults or at least evict them from their natal territories.*

*The off take of excessive numbers of territorial males reduce the sustainability of the hunting of wild lions significantly.*

#### **4. Status of lion sports hunting in Africa and its influence on lion hunting in South Africa.**

Safari hunting is a multi-million dollar industry in Africa and may prove to be a viable conservation strategy in some areas. By preserving large tracks of otherwise marginal land, it protects wildlife populations from other forms of encroachment. Lions are the principal species sought by hunters and their continued presence in the hunting areas is critically important to the industry because of the amount of revenue they deliver both directly and indirectly through the sale of extended safaris. Because lions have complex social behaviour that places them at high risk for being over exploited, it is important that harvesting be founded upon biologically sustainable quotas over the long term. For these reasons, lions have a high “extinction potential” (c.f. Ehrenfeld 1970).

Professional hunters working in Africa have observed over the last several years that “suitable” trophy male lions have become increasingly difficult to find (N Oelofse, *pers. comm.*; M. Tout in litt.) and that prides are smaller and more unstable, fewer cubs are being produced with fewer individuals surviving to reach adulthood (A. Carr & A. Gellatly). Plus research on hunted lion populations indicate that current quotas are unsustainable (Creel & Creel, 1997; Caro *et al* 1998; Whitman, in prep.) and that safari hunting negatively affects lion reproduction, behaviour, and overall population demography (Yamazaki, 1996; Creel & Creel, 1997; Whitman, in prep.).

It is not the purpose of this document to imply that this is a continental trend but rather isolated areas that have been over-exploited. The determination of quotas are very complex and ultimately, a true estimate of lion numbers in an area can only be done with extensive ground-based field work and individual identification, and necessitates a long term commitment, regardless of the technique used (Packer *et al.*, 1999). Most areas do not have a reliable count of lions (70 % of lions in Sub Saharan African can not be accurately assessed – Chardonnet, 2002). In general quotas for wild lions in most parts of Africa are above a sustainable level.

Lions are critically important to the modern day safari in several ways. First the availability of lions on license in an area is often what sells safaris and promotes utilization of less marketable species (Creel & Creel, 1997). The importance of lion availability was clearly demonstrated following Botswana’s ban on lion hunting when

many clients cancelled safaris despite knowing that all other plains game was still available because on their own plains game are not interesting enough for commercial hunting.

Every country that allows lion hunting requires the client to buy a multi week safari when hunting lions. Tanzania for example, mandates that clients must pay for a 21 day safari in order to shoot a lion, regardless of the actual time it takes to kill a lion, or whether the hunt is even successful. In 1995 it so happens that nearly 70% of lion licenses went unused (Broomhead 1997), in other words suitable trophy lions were not found during the 21 day safari. This is a phenomenon that occurs annually. More importantly this policy encourages clients to shoot more trophies of other species while on their lion hunt. This increases the overall hunting returns. A safari like this may cost the client between \$30 000 up \$50 000 US (that excludes other expenditures). This policy creates expectations of acquiring a prime lion trophy, ultimately letting a large percentage of clients down. It is at this stage that a decision is made to go to South Africa and hunt down a guaranteed prime specimen.

When wild lions are hunted they are often young males of which the manes have not developed completely. Only skull measurements are considered for record purposes and not the skin or other measurements. The need for a black-maned or at least a properly maned skin also lures these safari hunters to South Africa.

At this stage three aspects are identified that compel safari hunters to go to South Africa namely not getting a lion and/or getting a young lion and the fact that lionesses may not be hunted. This unusual hunting policy and compact hunting record requirements make South Africa a more enticing destination.

Several countries still allow baiting of lions using carcasses – in fact the majority of lions hunted in Tanzania are shot on bait (Viljoen P.C. *pers. comm.* 2005). This practice can very well lead to the increased hunting of younger inexperienced male lions. But can ultimately not be described as a challenging exercise.

To our opinion this policy is contributing to the ever increasing demand to hunt captive bred lions in South Africa.

Rowland Wards still accepts trophies from South Africa and Safari Club International has a separate class namely “South African” lions (ALWG 2002).

“Canned” or preferably High Fence lion hunting or Managed Hunting is highly criticized, and generally viewed as violating the rules of fair chase, and as such not considered hunting as much as it is shooting per se. However so-called ethical and sporting considerations aside, high fence lion (canned) hunting may alleviate some of the hunting pressure put upon wild lions, and for some hunters, is viewed no differently than the use of baits in wild populations (Whitman, 2002).

The general belief is that people hunt captive bred lions because they are not brave enough to go out in the wild to face and hunt a truly wild specimen (Verdoorn, G. 2003). Nothing can be further from the truth. In general wild free-ranging lions are extremely skittish and the vast majority is shot on baits at dusk or dawn as the requirement would have it. This is coincidentally two most likely periods when skittish wild lions would come in to feed on a bait. Lions that have been waiting at a bait during the day would move in and start feeding when it gets dark. Before the break of day they put in a final and concerted effort to feed some more before they go and hide in the vicinity of the carcass during daytime (Personal observation).

This relaxed hunt is very different from the one experienced by the hunter that is tracking his captive bred but extremely dangerous lion in a large (2 000 hectare plus) enclosure. A captive bred lion is a lion that had lost its fear of man. It is a lion that is most likely to charge on site. This is an experience seldom found in the wild with free-ranging specimens (Personal observation).

It is clearly stated by Viljoen (ALWG, 2002) that the South African and Tanzanian markets must not be compared and to a large extent that is true if we consider the large number of truly wild lions that are available (even if they are only two years old). Viljoen claims that the more wealthy client that wants to experience the true Africa goes to East Africa for this experience and that the less wealthy “collector” type come to South Africa.

My clients claim the opposite and that some of the same class of wealthy but disgruntled hunters come to them to finalize their quest for a guaranteed immaculate lion trophy.

The following excerpt suggests a certain but large degree of change in attitude on the side of SCI:

### **Safari Club International: Policy on Fenced Wildlife Operations.**

#### **Quoted:**

*“SCI First for Hunters (SCI) and its sister organization SCI Foundation (SCIF) were formed by hunters to represent hunters and their concerns about wildlife conservation and management issues. SCI advocates to protect the freedom to hunt and for wildlife conservation and management based on wildlife science. SCIF supports and manages wildlife conservation programs worked wide and promotes sound scientifically based management of wildlife through conservation hunting programs. With 211 chapters and over 43,000 members around the world, SCI hunter conservationists are dedicated to conservation of natural resources and advocacy for the hunting community.*

*This policy addresses SCI first for Hunters issues worldwide regarding hunting operations utilizing high fences as a wildlife management tool.*

*“Commercial demand for hunting and for sale of live wildlife and their products has prompted the growth of a commercial industry that raises non-domesticated native ungulates within managed properties.” (Demaris et al 2002:1) The industry also includes those properties that raise exotic*

wildlife. With the advent of chronic Wasting Diseases, confinement of wildlife and related activities have emerged as major conservation issues in North America and has ramifications to hunting –based businesses throughout the world. SCI has a strong interest in the status of the commercial hunting industry worldwide, reflected in the recognition of trophies from these types of facilities in its record books.

Man's relationship with various wildlife species has evolved over time, with some species becoming domesticated while attempts were made to eradicate some species because of threats to life and personal property. These relationships are not static in time, as some domesticated animals have returned to "wild" status while other species such as large carnivores have gone from pest to protected status and have been recovered to viable populations. Additionally, a host of species have come to be recognized as "game species" because of their elusiveness, cunning, appearance or other attribute which ensure that their pursuit will be challenging when practices of fair chase are observed. The growth of the commercial hunting industry in confined wildlife reflects a desire by the public to have an opportunity to pursue rare species or mature specimens of common species while experiencing the challenge of the hunt.

Landowners have the right, under property, law, to manage their lands for their own interests so long as those management practices are allowed under governmental laws and regulations. The erection of high fences to control animal movements is a legitimate wildlife management practice so long as the presence of the fence does not interfere with free-ranging animals movements to critical habitats. However, landowners have an obligation to ensure that their management practices do not threaten the population status of publicly owned wildlife in their area.

The Use of High fences to contain wildlife can be a legitimate tool for wildlife management, wildlife conservation and for hunting programs world wide when applied under appropriate conditions. Thus SCI First for Hunters advocates the following:

1. The state or country hunting industry shall have industry approved standards based on the specific conditions of that region including types of species, terrain, habitats and weather as well as such factors as cultural history of hunting practices and current regulations;
2. Management programs must include adequate practices to effectively address disease issues including a testing program, record keeping of animals that have been moved and any other preventative practices that are considered appropriate for the region and species involved;
3. Hunting programs conducted behind high fences must be conducted under fair chase principles for different species and habitat conditions but the hunting programs must have a reasonable set of standards that address the issue with a minimum standard which provides that all hunted animals have an opportunity to escape into adequate cover and to retain a natural flight response;
4. Management programs must address the well-being of the animals involved in all phases of the programs and must provide adequate food, water and cover within the fenced area;
5. Standards for high fence facilities should be of high quality with regular checks to maintain the integrity of the fence on the facility and a process to deal effectively with escaped animals;
6. Management programs must be conducted in such a manner that they will not shed a negative light on the sport of hunting.

*High fence hunting operations worldwide can offer unique hunting experiences to many types of hunters, including beginning hunters, advanced trophy hunters, elderly hunters, and special needs hunters. However, we also recognize that some of these facilities can provide opportunities to take animals in a manner that does not meet the ethical standards of fair chase. Property managers must conscientiously avoid any situation which cast a negative light on sport hunting. SCI knows many industry operations can provide high quality experiences and will work with the industry to promote fair chase within high fence facilities.*

*SCI believes the management of non-domesticated wild life within high fences has been practiced for centuries and remains legitimate activity. However, this legitimate activity must be balanced with the potential risks associate with enclosed wildlife. Because of these concerns, SCI recognizes the rational for reasonable regulatory oversight of this industry by appropriate governmental agencies”.*

#### **4.1 Procedures currently followed when hunting “High Fenced lions” or “Managed lion hunts”.**

1. The minimum size of the enclosure where a lion must be released before hunting is currently 1000 hectares.
2. This release must take place 24 hours before the commencement of the hunt.
3. The lion is not drugged or tranquilized at the time of the hunt.
4. The hunter must confirm that he/she is aware that the lion to be hunted is a captive bred specimen and sign an agreement.
5. The CITES permit also confirms that the lion was bred in captivity.
6. A provincial conservation official attends the hunt.
7. Approximately sixty (60) lions were hunted on four farms in the Free State per annum (Boeing, W., ALWG 2002).
8. Approximately 200 lions were hunted in 2004 in the North-West Province of which 20% were lionesses (Van Zyl, D. *pers. comm.*. 2005).
9. South African hunters comprise 3.4% of lion hunters in North-West.

## **5. Discussion on the Draft on Large Predators**

*Please refer to the attached Draft document. Our comments are inserted in red.*

However we have one fundamental inquiry for discussion:

***Managed wild populations***

a. It is our conviction that it is impossible for a pride of lions to qualify as a managed wild population because of the fact that these lions need to be constantly supplied with prey animals that are easy to capture. Furthermore it is impossible **to meet all the social requirements of a lion population**. For this reason such a group can merely be described as glorified captive lions.

b. To re-establish lions and wait for six months during which they are fed expensive wild natural prey animals (that are not predator wise) must be considered futile. During this period a variety of unfortunate events can take place – mostly related to the complex social behaviour patterns of lions. Once a decision is made to have a lion hunted it would be best to have it executed over a more realistic period of time. We fail to understand how and why a period of six months is required. On what scientific grounds was this decided on?

c. The owner must inform his provincial authority in any case timeously of his intention to have a certain lion hunted. Why artificially create a social pride of lions only to disrupt them six months later? Once a pride had settled in even a very large enclosure they have identified certain favourite lairs where they can be found at any time of the day. This is normal for all lions so there is not much effort required to find them.

d. If a concern was about potential after effect of tranquilizers and immobilizing agents, a period of fourteen days is enough to have all pharmaceuticals metabolized.

e. Breeders will from now on reduce human contact that may lead to imprinting to the absolute minimum.

f. Once a breeder has identified a captive bred, non-imprinted, wild lion for hunting this extensive re-establishment period of six months is unwarranted.

g. These lions are far more dangerous than their free-ranging wild counterparts and are never hunted on baits or at night but tracked and hunted on foot.

## **6. Proposal to the Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism**

1. We, the lion breeders and hunters acknowledge the fact that unethical hunting practices were exercised by a minority of our fellow breeders. This must be rectified. We now propose a more controlled system where ethical hunting will be practiced. Non-compliant breeders will be identified and disqualified.

2. We further acknowledge that the industry was not well regulated or organized in the past and that a concerted effort would be made to rectify this.
3. Every lion in private possession must be registered with a central governing body preferably the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. We are aware of a similar registering system for African buffaloes with the National Department of Agriculture for disease control purposes and would like to become members of a similar society. Currently approximately 800 buffalo owners from all over the country are registered.
4. An owner must register a specific property for the keeping of lions after an environmental impact assessment was completed and the property found to be viable.
5. A stringent set of standards will be determined and enforced regarding the size of the property and holding facilities as well as the size of enclosures on such a property. We request that the minimum size of a hunting enclosure be 2 000 hectares.
6. This entails that an owner would have to register every single lion on his/her property and that every lion would be electronically identifiable. Identification registers would be available and kept updated for inspection purposes at all time.
7. This further requires that no lion would be translocated or relocated without provincial or national permission and/or supervision and movement permit coverage.
8. Regarding the breeding of lions: no cubs would be removed from their mothers to be hand raised. Cubs would stay with their mothers until they are 5 months old. This relative non-interventionist approach would slow down the unrealistic birth rate of cubs as well as reducing high survival rate of cubs. It would also reduce concurrent human imprinting. This approach would also improve selection of better genetic stock as good mothers would be identified and stronger cubs would survive. White lion cubs are perhaps the only class that qualifies for hand raising.
9. Birth control will be practiced where applicable.
10. Genetic analysis will be done on breeding stock to identify southern African genetic stock to be propagated for future species conservation. Mitochondrial D-loop analysis can be applied to determine the origin of breeding stock. Breeding would be more controlled and purposeful.
11. We further request that the importation of lions to South Africa be terminated as such animals are unlikely to contribute constructively to our genetic constitution. Special permission for importation can be considered for white lion breeding stock and Barbary type lions after careful deliberation.
12. We further request that only *bona fide* registered lion breeders be allowed to entertain High Fenced lion hunting on their registered properties of 2 000 hectares and larger.

14. That these properties used for High Fenced lion hunting be registered separately if this is not the property used for breeding.

15. The use of immobilizing agents like Zoletil and others like medetomidine would be applied to the minimum. With appropriate holding facilities lions can be manipulated and moved for translocation purposes without immobilization or tranquilization.

16. Tranquilizing agents like azaperone, clopixon acuphase and trilafon would only be used when there is a clear indication for it for example after translocation or when lions from different backgrounds are introduced.

17. A more scientific approach to the management of such a breeding unit which would include nutritional, reproductive, ethological, veterinary and ecological features.

18. We further want to state that we are registered lion breeders with North West Province and that exorbitant amounts of money was used to create the required infrastructure.

## **7. Benefits of captive breeding and high fence hunting of lions.**

### **7.1 Earning of Foreign revenue.**

According to the South African Tourism Board, foreign hunters visit South Africa for the following reasons:

- A favourable exchange rate.
- Medical facilities of a relatively high standard.
- Large parts of the country is free of Malaria.
- The availability of the Big Five for hunting.
- The professional level of wildlife and game ranch management that produces an abundant source and diversity of huntable wild animals.

During 2002, 516 foreign hunters visited North West Province. Two thousand eight hundred and forty animals (2 840) were hunted that earned US\$4 422 000. Lion hunting was directly responsible for 36% of the total income which amounted to US\$1 560 000. The vast majority of lion hunters also hunted a variety of plains game. This game sector would have not been hunted if it was not for the effort to visit the province to hunt particularly lions. For example a variety of plains game can be hunted in Gauteng Province within close proximity of Johannesburg International Airport if it was only plains game that the hunter was interested in.

These foreign hunters flew to South Africa, made use of accommodation and also visited other tourist destinations elsewhere in the country. Internal airlines, traveling companies

and car rental companies are used by foreign hunters. Foreign hunters give more extravagant complimentary fees at the end of the hunt. They took their trophies to local taxidermists for processing for export or even final mounting. Venison that resulted from such a hunt is sold by the outfitter.

North-West is in possession of approximately 950 lions. To feed these animals requires large quantities of condemned meat and live animals. Large numbers of donkeys and other domestic stock is purchased from rural farming communities providing a significant income to them.

It is estimated that the North-West hunting industry generates approximately One hundred million rand (R100 000 000) per annum through direct and indirect outlets mentioned in the previous paragraphs.

## **7.2 Employment**

An industry like this requires intensive attention and supervision through personal assistance of its guests.

Positions employed directly or indirectly:

1. Professional hunters.
2. Trackers.
3. Drivers.
4. House keepers.
5. Camp attendants.
6. Receptionists.
7. Book keepers.
8. Domestic workers.
9. Fence maintenance staff.
10. Cleaners & feeders (keepers).
11. Slaughterers & skinners.
12. Culinary staff.
13. Waiters.
14. Duty Managers.
15. Technical maintenance staff.
16. Game capture staff.
17. Wildlife Consultants.
18. Photographer
19. Companies producing food additives.

## **7.3 Conservation Tool**

This has previously been addressed.

## **8. Conclusion**

- A. The captive breeding and hunting of such lions (“High Fenced lions”) **is** a conservation tool as it removes some of the pressure on the selective hunting of wild lions. Provided it is executed in an ethical manner and well regulated.
- B. South Africa is the second largest source of lions for hunting on the continent and is responsible for approximately 30% of the continental off take.
- C. Approximately 80% of South Africa’s hunted lions are captive bred.
- D. It is confirmed that the status of wild free-ranging lions in Africa is uncertain and definitely threatened by over-exploitation, agriculture, encroachment, poaching, inbreeding and disease. Large divergence exists between independent survey results and the margin of error in the results is extensive.
- E. Safari Club International released a favourable policy report on the hunting of “Fenced Wildlife Populations” and does not condemn this practice at all.
- F. The intricate social behaviour patterns of wild lions place them at risk of over-exploitation when unsustainable hunting quotas of a selective class of lions (namely adult males) is allocated.
- G. The demand to hunt lions will always be there and is in actual fact increasing. This demand on its own requires that more credit be given to captive breeding of lions.
- H. The North West Lion Breeders and Hunters Association undertake to improve standards and regulate the industry.
- I. The termination of the lion captive breeding and hunting industry will lead to massive losses in foreign income, job losses, decreases in the hunting of other species, taxidermy losses, redundant infrastructure and ultimately euthanasia of a large sector of the captive bred lion population.
- J. It is not the aim of this document to imply that the hunting of free-ranging wild lions is to the detriment of the lion meta-population. It is merely to provide evidence that some subpopulations are at distinct risk of being over-exploited.

## **9. Interim dispensation**

North West Lion Breeders and Hunters Association has the following enquiries:

1. Clients were booked a year in advance and deposits have been paid. Can these hunts be concluded?

2. A transition period is required to develop appropriate newly prescribed infrastructure and to re-establish staff structures.

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**This report was compiled on behalf of the North-West Lion Breeders and Hunters Association.**

Dr. Dewald F. Keet (BVSc., M.Med.Vet.Fer.)  
P.O.Box 12  
Skukuza  
1350.

*Dr. Keet has 18 years of intimate experience with lion management in the Kruger National Park and adjoining private nature reserves and buffer zones. He spent the last ten years doing research on bovine tuberculosis in lions in this ecosystem.*