

# NAMIBIA PROFESSIONAL HUNTING ASSOCIATION



## POSITION PAPER

### The Importance of Hunting towards Conservation



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## Introduction

For many years now an ideological battle is raging between anti-hunters and hunters, both interest groups claiming that their intention is the protection of nature.

This battle has reached new proportions in 2015, when the unfortunate hunting of the lion Cecil, at a time when emotions were whipped up by the release of the “Blood Lions Film” related to “canned lion hunting”, has enabled ideological campaigners to bring about widespread anti-hunting sentiments, which, together with subsequent actions like for example trophy transport embargoes, are detrimental to nature conservation.

It moreover has to be noted that large-scale estrangement from nature of a considerable portion of the world population does not make factual argumentation easier.

The matter was emotionalised and presented in the social media in a way, which made any sophisticated debate impossible. The executive committee of the Namibia Professional Hunting Association (NAPHA EXCO) then decided not to contribute to the noise, but rather await the calming down of emotions, to, at a time when rationalism has returned, try to factually contribute to a better understanding of hunting, which, if conducted sustainably and ethically, hugely contributes to the protection of wildlife and its habitat. And that – hopefully – is what both interest-groups ultimately wish to accomplish.

As we now have entered a new year and some sober analysis is urgently needed in the best interest of practical nature conservation, we feel that now the time is ripe to address some issues. Hereunder now follow some essays on topics identified by the NAPHA EXCO and dealt with by various members of the EXCO, namely

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It is our hope that stakeholders and interested persons will read and consider this discourse and that a rational debate in the best interest of wildlife and its habitats can take place.

## **General aspects of hunting by Kai-Uwe Denker, President of NAPHA**

As the protection of wildlife and its habitat – the protection of nature in the wider sense – is the declared intention of both the opposing groups, it appears necessary to first of all in an unemotional way work out what is in the best interest of intact nature. At the core of the anti-hunting campaigns is the total inability to accept death as a reality of the natural world. As, however, nature conservation is the essence of the debate, we should first and foremost understand nature as such.

All natural environments revolve around food chains and natural cycles, on the system of 'eat and be eaten', on the laws of hunter and hunted.

We have to accept that death is a totally normal thing in nature.

All rejuvenation on earth rests on the principle of birth and growth and death. This is the case in the plant, as well as animal life. If we have a close look at the luxuriant growth of plant life under favourable conditions on good, well-watered soil, we have to admit that not even in plant life there are peaceful conditions.

Every plant, every insect, every bird is in severe competition for a place in the sun, for the right to live, to feed, to mate, to propagate, to reproduce.

That is the very principle of life. That is the very principle of nature. The plant life then is the base for the flourishing of different facets of animal life. The zebra eats grass and the kudu leaves. The lion in turn eats the zebra and the kudu, the hyena and the vulture eat the remains of the zebra and the kudu slain by the lion and ultimately bacteria decompose the remains of all animals. Although certain aspects of this chain may appear cruel, this principle is the very foundation on which the harmonic interaction of life on earth rests.

No part of this cycle is "good" or "bad". The zebra is not "good" because it eats grass, nor is the lion bad because it eats "meat".

However much we like to entertain ideas of "paradise on earth", we have to accept that death is an inevitable fact of life and a fundamental precondition for rejuvenation in nature.

And the majority of deaths in nature are brought about by physical killing.

At this stage I would like to rest the topic of life and death in nature for a moment and address another important conservation concern: The destruction of natural habitats by modern man.

In the early 1970ties individuals and institutions really caring for conservation had to realise, that a hunting ban, which often they themselves had called for, did not deliver the expected results in protecting endangered species. At that time Africa was not even the focus of such considerations. In question often was the decline of animal species, which had become endangered in Europe and North America due to increasing industrialisation and intensifying of agriculture and for the protection of which a hunting ban had been called for. Thorough research into the reasons for the continued decline of these species revealed that not hunting, but rather the destruction of living space by the following major causes was the true reason for the misery of many animal species.

1. Intensive agriculture
2. Pollution of air and water
3. Road traffic
4. Building-up of areas and regulation of watercourses
5. Destruction of habitat by human expansion, mining and other forms of industrialisation.<sup>1</sup>

Regulated hunting could not be identified as having negative impacts on healthy animal populations. In the wake of this realisation came the introduction of the Principle of Sustainable Use of Natural Resources. This concept was implemented with particular success in Africa, where the destruction of natural habitat (and with that the decline of wild animals) by population explosion and advancing industrialisation had only just begun. Via this concept the decline of big game, which had well nigh disappeared in Europe and North America, could be checked in spite of massive habitat losses.

Namibia in particular established itself a reputation as being a country with successful nature conservation strategies. The fact that destruction of habitat is the greatest real conservation concern makes it prudent to place the protection of intact habitat as the top conservation priority.

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<sup>1</sup> M.E. Reiterer, Ärgernis Jagd, Leopold Stocker Verlag

It is an undisputed fact that hunting via the concept of sustainable utilisation of natural resources contributes to the protection of habitats, which, as elaborated above, should be the most important conservation concern, because without suitable habitats there is no wildlife. Modern first world “consumer- and throw-away-societies” in fact dramatically contribute to habitat loss via pollution and the growing needs in resources; be it by exploitation of mineral resources or be it by intensifying of agriculture with accompanying use of harmful pesticides or the establishing of mono-cultures. Hunting via the concept of sustainable utilisation on the other hand makes alternative land uses possible, which contribute to the protection of habitats. This is not to pass judgement on the necessities or realities of modern western way of life. It is just to point out that hunting contributes to the protection of intact ecosystems – which as such is one of the worldwide conservation concerns. To put it very simple: Hunters certainly do not contribute to the large-scale “killing” of natural environments; rather the contrary.

I here would like to come back to the issue of death in nature. Death in one or other form, be it predation, diseases, starvation – due to drought under African climatic conditions or severe winter in the northern hemisphere – or old age is a hundredfold daily reality in any natural system. It is not a matter of right or wrong, it is simply a necessity to keep the natural balance intact. At this stage I would like to refer to the following scientifically proven statement: Regulated, sustainable hunting (which after all is one of the forms of natural predation) only pre-empts mortality in one of the other forms: disease, starvation or old age, all of which serve to keep natural balance intact.<sup>2</sup>

One of the arguments favoured by anti-hunting groups is that trophy hunting is neither ethically nor ecologically justifiable, as

- a) trophy hunting of threatened species like lion and elephant takes place
- b) trophy hunting selectively targets individual animals, which are particularly important for the population

At this stage I do not want to address the issue of ethical justification – that is the topic of the next essay.

As far as the hunting of threatened species like lion and elephant are concerned it again has to be emphasised that these species in particular suffer and are endangered by the loss of habitat. Elephant and lion need very large home ranges or territories and are in constant conflict with human expansion and agricultural activities like crop production and cattle farming. Namibia's Policy of Sustainable Use of Natural Resources has resulted in alternative forms of land use, which result in the protection of habitats for these species and in tolerance of rural communities for these conflict species. It is of particular importance that visiting trophy hunters directly contribute to nature conservation by adding financial value to lion and elephant and allow communities to compensate crop and stock losses via income from hunting quotas.

The growing intolerance for elephant and lion and the indiscriminate killing of lion in rural communities in North-western Namibia is the direct result of interference of the animal-rightist-movement with the sustainable use principle.

Concerning the accusation that trophy hunting selectively targets individual animals, which are of particular importance for the population, it has to be noted that by trophy hunting only a very small percentage of an animal population is removed. The average off-take by trophy hunting varies between 0.6% of a population (Elephant) and 2% of a population (antelope species). Ideally those specimens past their prime are targeted, specimens which have fulfilled their reproductive role; old animals with charismatic, worn trophies – that after all is the essence of trophy hunting. NAPHA encourages this approach by the prestigious Game Fields Medal, which aims to create incentives to allow well-endowed specimens to grow old and fulfil their natural role within the population.

I would like to, at the hand of the Cecil lion and the hundred-pounder elephant, the hunting of which has resulted in last year's turmoil, look into the ecological aspects, which are used as leverage against hunting.

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<sup>2</sup> Heribert Kalchreuter, Die Sache mit der Jagd, BLV Verlagsgesellschaft

The lion Cecil was thirteen years old. Scientific studies have revealed that lion are in their prime between five and eight years old, at which age they are able to maintain a position as dominant pride males. In general males rarely grow much older than ten years in the wild. Out of a purely ecological viewpoint the death of Cecil was of no consequence at all. His death in the one or other form was imminent.

As far as the hundred-pounder elephant is concerned, I have no information at my disposal to judge his age. But for one or other unfounded reason many people believe that bulls like this, with tusks almost reaching the ground, are the “elephant beauty ideal” favoured by the females. There is no scientific justification for this assumption, rather the contrary; large tusks like this are disadvantageous for elephants, as their size hamper the agility of the bull and prove ineffective in dominance fights with other bulls, forcing the carrier to avoid fights and forgoing mating rights or braking the clumsy tusks during fights, as is proven by the fact that famous Kruger Park bulls like Joao, Duke and many others completely broke their ivory during fights or were even killed during bull-fights like the famous bulls Hlanganini, Tschokwane and many other large ivory carriers. Outsized trophy animals may prove interesting for photographers or hunters alike, but they are of no ecological importance. It is not in the best interest of nature conservation if incidents like these are pulled from context and used for ideological campaigns.

It can be concluded that it is of particular importance that conflict species like elephant and lion, who are threatened by habitat loss and human-wildlife conflict, have a financial value as to secure their long-term protection.

It also has to be noted that human interference in natural cycles (opening up of artificial water for agricultural needs and removal of natural predators because of human-wildlife conflict) has resulted in disturbance of natural balance and exponential increase of certain species, resulting in horrible diseases, like for example the kudu rabies disease in Namibia. Reduction of numbers by sustainable use is the obvious measure to keep natural balance in tact.

It can be concluded that regulated trophy hunting is advantageous for the protection of habitats and has no negative ecological implications, as is proven by the success of Namibia’s Sustainable Use Concept. The question remains, whether, bearing in mind that death in one of many forms is a totally normal occurrence in any natural cycle, man should not be allowed to be part of nature and participate therein.

Nature rests on the principle of eat and be eaten, of hunter and hunted. That, as was elaborated above, within the natural world is not a question of “good” or “bad” – it is a precondition to maintain natural balance

Let us not forget that man also was part of this magnificent natural world, before he turned to nature-destroying developments and technologies.

Do we want nature? May we even dare to think that humanity can detach itself from nature? Is nature as such bad? Or is it only man who is bad if he leads a natural life? Is man good if he has turned his back on nature?

And if we come to the conclusion that we want and need nature, which role has mankind in nature? For what reason should man not be part of natural settings, if his interests and his instincts allow for such, and as long as his actions are sustainable and within ethical parameters? These questions bring us to the matter of emotions of hunting and its ethical justification.



## Emotions of hunting by Kai-Uwe Denker, President of NAPHA

Tania Blixen, author of *Out of Africa*, has stated: "One can say that hunting always is a love affair. The hunter is in love with the game; real hunters always are true animal lovers."<sup>3</sup> This statement must appear contradictory, yet it is true. It is very, very difficult to explain its essence, but then it is not the only valuable human emotion, which is very difficult to really explain. For the purely factual matter of nature conservation, it might be more important that through their passion for the chase, hunters contribute to practical nature conservation and to make do with this fact, rather than to try and explain the emotions of hunting. In this way people with an unemotional approach towards conservation issues often consider hunting an "indispensable evil" of successful conservation strategies. In the best interest of practical nature conservation one could let matters rest here. For two reasons, however, this is no longer possible. First of all radical anti-hunters are not prepared to accept this and try to label hunters as "immoral". Secondly we hunters are utterly convinced that sustainable and ethical hunting is an important, morally just doing; we are not prepared to accept being labelled as the "bad ones", the "indispensable evil" of conservation.

Discussions about legal rifles in the hands of private individuals in the wake of amuck runs in Germany, led to a comprehensive "personality diagnostics" by way of a random sample by psychologist Professor Dr Heubrock<sup>4</sup>, during which hunters were compared with non-hunters in a psychological study. The aim of the study was to find out what the composure of people, who have legal access to rifles, is. Are they more dangerous? How do they handle their responsibility? Hunters showed up much better against the non-hunting group: Higher life-satisfaction, lower aggressiveness, better impulse control and so on. This gives an indication of the fact that being out in nature and leading an original live close to nature brings about life-satisfaction and inner composure – traits which are not always found easily amongst urban populations and the lack of which at times result in manifold uncontrollable emotions. There thus must be something deeply satisfactory and emotionally valuable in hunting. How is this to be explained?

First of all hunting is not something instilled into a person. It originates from within the nature of mankind, it is an ancient instinct.

According to scientists the key in the process of becoming human and the development of culture with our early ancestors took place, when *Homo erectus*, the first early human who walked exclusively upright, changed over from an exclusive plant diet to a mixed diet with a high proportion of meat. The greatest change during the transformation from animal to human took place in the central organ, the brain. The enlargement of the brain-volume resulted in an increase of the energy expenditure – and the source of this energy was meat.

There are two important conclusions from this.

Firstly, the pronounced hunting instincts and hunting qualities of our ancestors laid the foundation to all human culture. And secondly with the development into humanity, with growing awareness, with growing consciousness came circumspection and compassion and the foundation was laid, to what we call ethical conduct.

We have to realise that such an important aspect of the human evolution is deeply embedded in the human instincts. It is important to note that hunting as such, contrary to what anti-hunters try to make believe, is not a perverted inclination, but under natural circumstances rather a totally normal occupation.

However, apart from the accessibility to cultural influences, there is another very important difference between animal and man: man has a deliberate conscience.

Even if accepting the relevance of natural laws, a human being is no wild animal. His actions should comply with basic human traits like compassion and circumspection. We hunters very clearly state that we feel that hunting should be conducted according to very strict legal regulations, ethical behaviour and always be sustainable.

<sup>3</sup> Tania Blixen, *Schatten wandern übers Gras*, Rowolt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH

<sup>4</sup> Internet: JAWINA Interview "Gemischte Gefühle"

There is a deep satisfaction in leading an original life, in living off the land. This might become apparent in the satisfaction a planter feels in looking over his plantation and eventually harvesting his crop. There is a deep satisfaction for a fisherman, not only in pulling a fish from the river, but even more to enjoy the peace of a quiet stream. There is intense satisfaction for a hunter to be out in the wilderness and be part of the ancient rhythm of nature. Is this feeling unjust? With all due respect, who is entitled to decide that man should not be part of natural settings, not be allowed to take wild fruit or mushrooms from the land? Should not be allowed to catch a fish or bag a wild animal?

Is it not rather a question of tolerance to let individuals decide whether they would like to participate in nature or lead a nature-detached life – of course always under the precondition that basic human understanding of fair treatment of any living creature is maintained and that sustainability is ensured. In this context it has to be noted that modern western ways of living are unsustainable in their destruction of nature, waste gas emission and pollution in general. There is urgent need for schemes to up hold the on-going destruction of natural habitats. Hunting is one.

The majority of the open-minded general public agrees that hunting for meat has its role in conservation, while trophy hunters are made out to be the “bad boys” amongst the hunters. This view has its origin in two aspects. Firstly – and we fully admit that – in certain negative trends of trophy hunting, which we like to describe as “trophy collecting” as opposed to “true hunting”. The difference being that trophy collectors are some ego driven personalities, trying to feed their vanity by boasting with a collection of outstanding or rare trophies, with little desire or interest to enjoy an original hunting experience while obtaining these trophies. This has led to some truly abhorrent practises like “canned hunting”, “put and take” and others. Secondly there is a misunderstanding on what trophy hunting (please note: not trophy collecting) really is. We have to look into the past to understand this.

In ancient times when hunters had to rely on primitive weapons like clubs, snares, spears, bow and arrows great skill was necessary to approach animals close enough to bring these weapons to bear. The actual slaying of the animal then was painful and cruel. The desire to kill humanely and effectively lead to the development of firearms, which on the other hand made hunting much easier. And now comes the point at issue: contrary to popular belief, meat hunting in fact often is reduced to the act of “killing for meat”. The next best animal – and often many animals in a short time – are slain to “collect meat”. Trophy hunting on the other hand is about the experience of being out in nature while securing meat. The hunter spends time in search of one specific, cunning old animal and once found, tries to outwit this special animal. He has to refrain from shooting “the first animal he comes across”. If he is unsuccessful to find or outwit that special trophy animal, he is prepared to return empty handed. If in this way you have truly been part of nature, having experienced its laws and regularities – life and death, disease and depredation and constant rejuvenation by new birth and renewed death in manifold ways to ensure natural balance –, if under averse wilderness conditions you succeeded to bag marvellous wild animals, innermost emotions are released which tell you: Yes, it is okay to hunt. Life and death and hunting are part of nature.

There is a fine line between “skilful fair chase hunting” and unfair human technical superiority – we admit that and we are aware that crossing this line by deliberate creation of unfair or unnatural circumstances has resulted in many a negative deviation from true hunting.

Trophy hunting in principle is obtaining meat under more challenging conditions. A trophy hunter has outgrown the urge to shoot the first animal he sees or shoot many animals. At this point I would like to come back to the statement of Tania Blixen. The fact that the hunter loves and admires the animal has its outer token in the fact that the hunter keeps trophies. The entire being of the wild animal in some way reflect beautifully in the horns or the skin of the animals.

Non-hunting nature lovers hang the horns of a stag over their garage door. The horns of kudu or sable, or even the skin of a lion, adorn many a tourist lodge. They add a flair of the wilderness into human dwellings. Is this wrong? Let us remain tolerant and practical. Must these unquestionably beautiful natural artefacts rot in the wild because some people lead ideological campaigns against an ancient natural human doing? Where do we start and where do we stop? May we display minerals or pieces of dead wood in our homes?

The trophy hunter is the dedicated high-end tourist willing to travel to remote regions and hunt under adverse conditions and even prepared to return empty handed. This kind of low-impact high-output client is indispensable for true wilderness conservation.

This now brings me to the last aspect still questioned: Why do trophy hunters shoot animals like lion and leopard although their meat is not consumed?

The answer lies in the interaction of all creatures in nature. In order to survive under natural conditions any creature has to fit into the natural hierarchy. Fleet-footed creatures like antelopes can rely on speed and agility to survive. More clumsy species like buffalo or elephant, but even baboons rely on defence strategies to ensure the survival of the fittest. The species *Homo sapiens* in ancient times has enforced something called “the natural fear of animals for man”. This was essential to ensure the survival of man and its offspring (and later its livestock), because *Homo sapiens* was a vulnerable species. Its survival depended on its intellect and its boldness. Even today it is necessary to enforce this “natural fear (or at least respect) for man” onto dangerous wildlife in rural African regions, where lion and other potentially dangerous animals live in close proximity of humans and their livestock, to ensure a certain safety.

It is just not realistic to believe that for example lion or leopard “in principal are friendly towards man”. Any predator, if hungry, will prey on any other creature (inclusive of man) it can overpower. Early hunters, by way of their boldness, have seen to it that even a lion had natural fear for man. Still today hunters have to fulfil this role under rural conditions in Africa to make co-existence possible.

This bold, ancient fire still rests deeply within each and every one of us, although many are not aware of it. Still it erupts every now and then and becomes visible in horrible wars or other forms of brutality, if not controlled and if individuals have not learned to know their innermost. It is irrepressible because it is a prerequisite of survival. It is part of our nature.

And herein lies the simple reason for the surprising results of Professor Dr. Heubrooks study.

Hunters, compared to non-hunters, have a higher life-satisfaction, lower aggressiveness, better impulse control and so on, because apart from the deep satisfaction of leading an original live, hunters, by way of knowing their own nature, have learned to control their innermost. Ethical conduct and self-restraint is taught in hunting traditions and hunter cultures, while by hunting as such, indispensable insight into the principle of life and death is gained.

Conscientious, sustainable hunting is the very school of life.

This statement may come as a total surprise to anti-hunters, but anybody really interested in the motives, into “right or wrong” of hunting, has to deeply think on this. The alternative is the renunciation from nature; the ultimate consequence was aptly described in “Brave New World” by Aldous Huxley.<sup>5</sup>

After these philosophical deliberations, which are aimed at understanding hunting as such, more practical consequences of hunting as a conservation tool are the subject of the following essays.

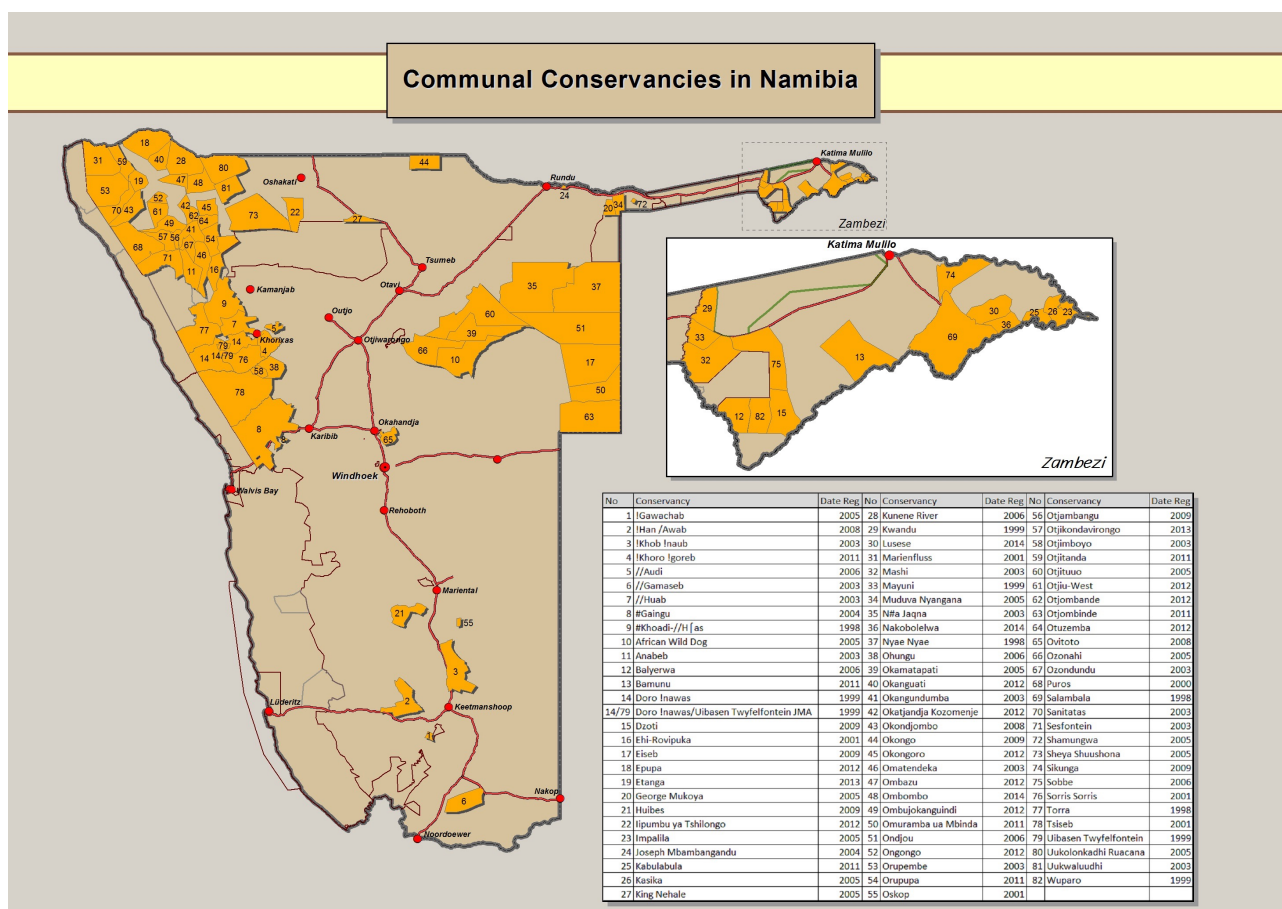
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<sup>5</sup> Aldous Huxley, Brave New World, The Hogarth Press London



## Involvement of local communities in remote rural African regions by Riva Namene, Member of the NAPHA EXCO

The Communal Conservancy Program of the Namibian Government is widely acknowledged as a shining example of practical nature conservation through the concept of sustainable use. This Program in remote regions, where income possibilities often are meagre, but natural resources (amongst them wildlife, inclusive of conflict species like elephant and lion outside of National Parks) often are abundant, brings advantages in job-creation and additional income and incentives for practical nature conservation in addition to subsistence agriculture. Out of a conservation viewpoint it is of major importance, as it lends financial value to wildlife and leads to tolerance for wild animals, even dangerous and harmful species like lion and elephant. We would like to refer to the Cabinet Decision regarding “Namibia’s position to oppose any call to ban or restrict hunting and the export of wildlife products from Namibia”, released on 4 March 2016 by the Honourable Minister of Information, Tjekero Tweya.



### From colonialism to conservation.

From the historical perspective, the following information is important to know the origin of conservancies. Namibia, formerly South West Africa, was a German colony until 1918, when South Africa was mandated by the League of Nations, the forerunner of the United Nations, to administer the territory “in the interest of its population”. What followed was a history of dispossession. Indigenous Namibians were driven from their lands into barren ‘reserves’ by a South African government that applied the apartheid principle, to make way for South African settler farmers. Especially, in the arid Kaokoveld, now known as northern Kunene Region, Namibians and their livestock were forced to compete for land with wildlife that had roamed there for centuries.

To cut a long story short, it was in this environment that the first efforts at community conservation in Namibia began. The idea was put forward by pioneering conservationist Garth Owen-Smith. The concept was to place wildlife in the hands of the very people accused of poaching by the government, the local people.<sup>6</sup>

This article, mostly, from 'A Gift to the Earth' relates to the establishment of communal conservancies, where rural residents on communal land could have the same rights over wildlife as private farmers, enabling them to operate tourism and trophy hunting business and to diversify incomes. Sustainable trade in plant products began to develop, including devil's claw, used for medicine, and Commiphora, used in the perfume industry.

In recognition of the innovative legislation that developed power over the environment, the Founding President, Dr. Sam Nuyoma, was awarded the 'Gift to the Earth'-Award in 1998. This WWF Award is a public celebration of a conservation action, which demonstrates environmental leadership, and is globally significant to the protection of the living world. This gives us a picture how conservancies came into being.

### **Now what exactly is a communal conservancy?**

1. A communal conservancy has fixed boundaries agreed between its founding members and neighbouring communities. It is usually split into zones, integrating traditional resource use with new income sources: tourism, the sustainable use of wildlife, including trophy hunting, fishing and fishery protection areas, and exclusive wildlife conservation areas.

Communal conservancies are registered by the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) and adhere to Ministry regulations. A conservancy has:

- A constitution
- An elected management committee
- A game management plan
- Benefits distribution plan

All hunting is based on game counts and the management plan and has to be approved by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism via strict quotas.

2. Sustaining the conservancy movement. Impressively, 26 of the established conservancies have attained financial self-sufficiency, while 23 others are earning income that is used to support conservancy operations. However, conservancies will require recurrent access to a range of critical support services, and the availability of these support services will be dependent upon the ability of the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Programme to permanently provide such services as training of new committees, assistance with management plans, brokering with new joint venture lodge and trophy hunting agreements, enterprise development, etc. There is a need for a permanent CBNRM extension system for conservancies and community forests.<sup>7</sup> The continuation of trophy hunting is of critical importance for the financial sustainability of the program.

It can be concluded that the Communal Conservancy Programme of the Namibian Government has dramatically contributed to social upliftment and economic empowerment of the Namibian people.

The following benefits are derived from hunting, based on statistical facts from 82 registered communal conservancies in Namibia.

- Conservancies generate more than N\$70 million every year in direct benefit to rural communities.
- 13% of the country's population living in conservancies.

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<sup>6</sup> WWF, 'Namibia's Gift to the earth', 2002

<sup>7</sup> WWF, Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations NACSO

- 44.5% of the country total surface is under some form of formal biodiversity conservation management.
- Approximately 300 000 people, almost 13% of the country's population, live in these conservancies, 2000 permanent jobs are created, and 3500 temporary jobs are created.

The critical question must be allowed, what the envisaged ban on the import of hunting trophies into the EU will achieve? An additional movement of economic refugees, who where deprived from their livelihoods at home, seeking better possibilities in Europe?

Moreover the Communal Conservancy Programme creates awareness and tolerance for wildlife and as such gives incentives for practical nature conservation. As such it has to be noted that a large part of Namibia today is under some form of conservation. Government hunting Concessions is another form of securing income from remote areas. The Communal Conservancy Program rests on sustainable utilisation of natural resources. Strictly regulated trophy hunting is one of the most important pillars of the sustainable use principle.

More specific financial contributions by trophy hunting and its impact are the topic of the next essay.

## **Economic benefits of hunting to Namibia by Royston Wright, member of the NAPHA EXCO**

As part of the recent furore surrounding the so-called Cecil the lion killing and the concomitant demands for trophy hunting to be banned, I was asked to write an article pertaining to the Economic benefits to local communities of trophy hunting in Namibia.

During the course of engaging in research for this documentary contribution, I consulted a number of sources, including the internet. I was amazed and shocked at the amount of “pseudo science” and flawed, one sided and factually incorrect research documents floating around on the internet. That, I suppose, is the flaw of the internet; namely that anyone can post anything and, since it's on the internet, it must be true. This is a fallacy and must be carefully considered when using the internet as source of research, especially when it comes to such emotive issues such as hunting.

As a result of the deluge of, often false, flawed and factually incorrect information available on the internet, I decided to rather approach the source, as it were; those on the ground who are involved in conservation on a daily basis; and those directly involved in nature, or influenced by nature. For this reason, I approached various role – players who are actually on the ground and who are directly involved in conservation and social upliftment here in Namibia.

I shall commence this study on the macro scale in terms of the contribution of trophy hunting to the economic well – being of Namibia as a whole and thereafter focus in on local communities within the Namibian Communal Conservancies; commercial livestock farming operations in Namibia; and, finally, on our own farm here in Namibia.

### **Macro – Economic Effect**

Namibia is not a rich country and relies heavily on its natural resources in order to generate economic growth. This reliance is based upon the extraction of raw materials and minerals from the earth, fishing along its coast, agriculture, tourism and; of course, hunting.

Although no definitive value is attached to trophy hunting, tourism accounts for about 3% of Namibia's GDP. In addition to this, about 27% of all employment in Namibia is directly attributable to the travel and tourism industry, a substantial figure when one takes Africa's high unemployment rates into account. This includes Namibia, with a listed unemployment rate listed by the World Bank in 2015 as being stable at 28% of the total population.

It must be noted, however, that a large portion of those listed by the World Bank as being “unemployed” are, in fact, beneficiaries of the Namibian Communal Conservancy programmes.

### **Economic Benefits of Trophy Hunting to Communal Conservancies in Namibia**

I shall leave it to an internationally respected conservation organisation, the WWF, to point out the benefits that trophy hunting brings to Communal Conservancies in Namibia through a study undertaken by them between 1998 and 2013. The title of this study is ***“Complimentary benefits of tourism and hunting to communal conservancies in Namibia”***. It must be stressed that this study piece, unlike many of the pseudo – studies available on the internet, has been peer reviewed and independently verified.

In this study, an evaluation of the above heading was undertaken of a total of 77 Communal Conservancies in Namibia between 1998 and 2013.

In their executive summary, the authors of this paper conclude that, inter alia:

- Across all conservancies, total benefits from hunting and tourism have grown at roughly the same rate, although conservancies typically start generating benefits from hunting within 3 years of formation as opposed to after 6 years for tourism.
- Disaggregation of data reveals the main benefits from hunting are income for conservancy management and meat to the community at large, while the majority of tourism benefits are salaried jobs at lodges.
- A simulated ban on trophy hunting significantly reduced the number of conservancies that were able to cover their operating costs, whereas eliminating income from tourism did not have as severe an effect.
- Given that the benefits generated from hunting and tourism typically begin at different times (earlier versus later, respectively) and flow to different segments of local communities, these two activities together can provide the greatest incentives for conservation.

I shall make use of various extracts from this paper in order to highlight the benefits of both tourism and hunting to local economies, as well as explain how each undertaking benefits different sectors within those communities.

It has been shown in this document that within the respective tourism/ hunting sectors, the following are the norm:

TOURISM	HUNTING
Income derived from tourism lodge total revenue: 8 – 12%.	Income derived from trophy fees (depending on species): 30 – 75%.
Employment offered by lodges: 20 – 50.	Employment offered in hunting camps: 8 – 10.
Lodge employees the primary beneficiaries of tourism operations.	Governance structures, management costs and local communities are the primary beneficiaries.
Requires major donor or capital investment to get off the ground.	Requires minimal investment to commence operations.
Differences in how benefits from tourism and trophy hunting flowed to the different constituencies contained within communal conservancies. Based on detailed financial accounting data from 2011-2013, the majority (58.3%) of the financial benefits from tourism were in the form of jobs to conservancy members at joint-venture lodges, while the lodge contractual fees going to conservancy management (30.3%) and non-financial benefits to the community at large (11.4%) were smaller shares of the total.	In contrast, the majority (64.3%) of the benefits from hunting were cash for the operation of the conservancy, with a significant fraction also going to the community at large in the form of meat from hunted animals (32.0%, or approximately 1.4 million kg over the three years). Conservancies used income from trophy hunting and tourism in a variety of ways that benefited the entire community, most importantly for the salaries of conservancy employees and for other conservancy operating costs, but also for compensation for wildlife conflict, payments to traditional authority structures, direct cash dividends, community-level projects and infrastructure development. Our data suggest that running costs, conservancy employee salaries and the various benefits to the community at large were mostly derived from hunting, since of the total fees paid to conservancy committees from 2011-2013, \$ 5.41 million (72%) were paid by hunting operators, while \$ 2.13 million (28%) came from tourism operators.
Very few conservancies (12%) specialize in tourism.	Most conservancies generating benefits from tourism also generated benefits from hunting. In contrast, over half (54%) of the conservancies generating benefits in Namibia did so from hunting alone, since hunting can be sustained in areas with relatively low densities or visibilities of wildlife, and in landscapes that are unappealing and/or inaccessible for photographic tourism (Lindsey et al. 2006).
The sustainability of photographic nature-based tourism in Africa and beyond has also come under scrutiny (Buckley 2004; Newsome et al. 2012). In Namibia, relevant issues for ecological sustainability include impacts of intense wildlife viewing on animal behaviour, localized environmental implications of the development of tourism infrastructure (lodges, campsites, roads, disposal facilities, etc.) in sensitive arid environments, and climate change impacts from the carbon emissions of increasing numbers of international visitors.	Hunting generates a higher per capita income from hunters in terms of less hunters vs large numbers of guests at lodges, game viewing vehicles, etc.; thus giving rise to a smaller carbon footprint generated by hunters.
Lodges only viable in areas that are well established, have plentiful animals to view and with a mild climate.	Hunting is viable in areas with little to no infrastructure, in game scarce areas and in areas with a harsher climate.

Statistical differences among various metrics of total benefits time series generated from trophy hunting versus tourism on communal conservancies (n=52)\*.

<b><u>Variable</u></b>	<b><u>Hunting</u></b>	<b><u>Tourism</u></b>	<b><u>t</u></b>	<b><u>p</u></b>
Benefits in 2013 (USD 2013)	41,453	56,255	-0.91	0.36
Trend (linear regression) of annual change (USD 2013)	2,458	3,954	-1.39	0.17
Volatility (root mean square error) of change over time (USD 2013)	79,192	82,501	-0.16	0.83
Average annual gain (USD 2013)	8,723	11,175	-0.93	0.36
Maximum annual gain (USD 2013)	47,420	68,694	-1.19	0.23
Lag (years) between conservancy formation and first benefits	2.81	5.71	-3.29	0.001

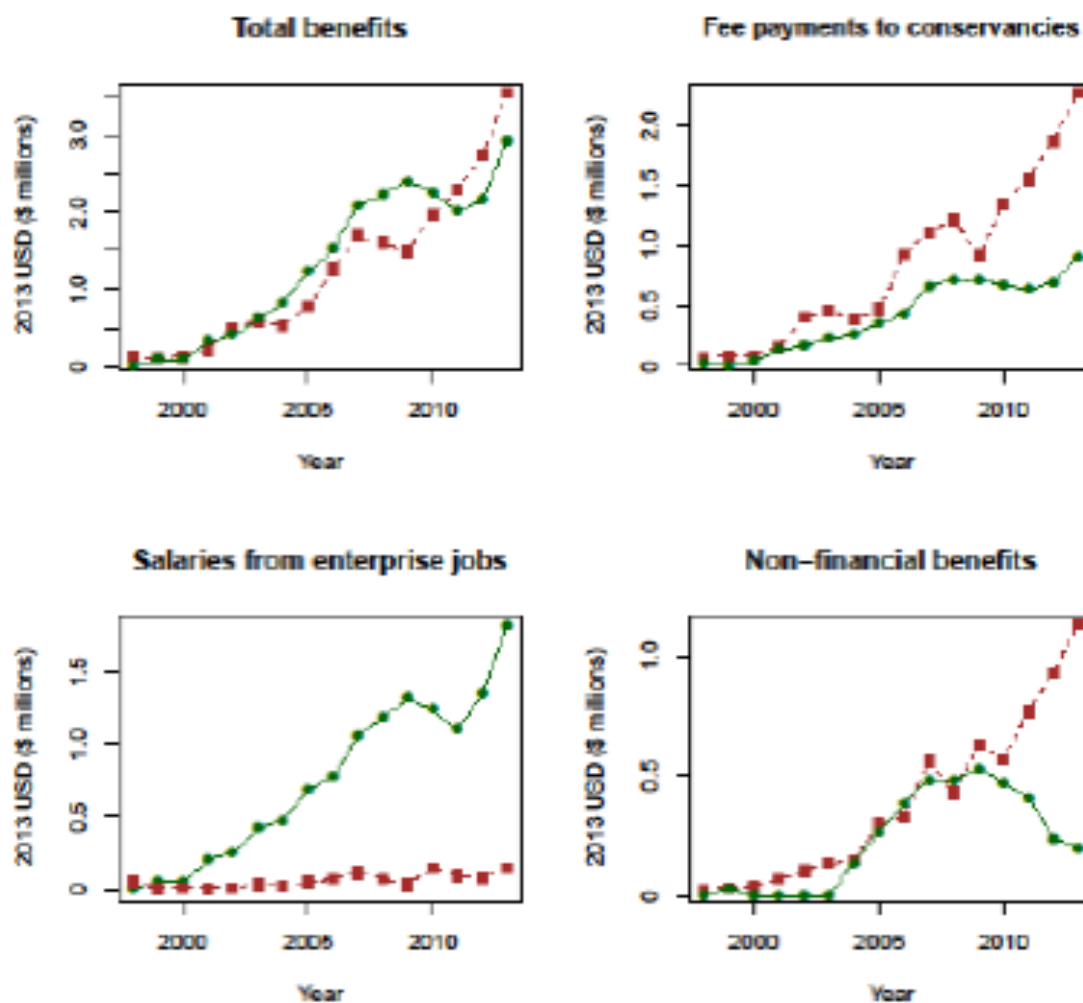
Number of animals harvested in 2013, by species, along with the average payment made per animal and the estimated overall contribution of each species to trophy hunting income (in 2013 USD\$) on communal conservancies in Namibia.

<b><u>Species</u></b>	<b><u>Animals hunted</u></b>	<b><u>Payment-per-animal</u></b>	<b><u>Revenue</u></b>	<b><u>% of total</u></b>
Baboon	17	25.62	435.58	0.03
Black-backed Jackal	6	23.65	141.91	0.01
Black-faced Impala	8	723.55	5,788.38	0.3
Blue Wildebeest	12	382.26	4,587.14	0.3
Buffalo	71	5,497.93	390,352.70	23.4
Burchell's Zebra	22	388.69	8,550.10	0.5
Bushbuck	1	746.89	746.89	0.04
Common Impala	22	180.91	3,980.08	0.2
Crocodile	22	1,321.06	29,063.28	1.7
Common Duiker	5	116.18	580.91	0.03
Elephant	69	13,296.47	917,458.09	54.9
Gemsbok	60	274.79	16,490.46	1
Giraffe	7	677.80	4,744.50	0.3
Hartmann's Mountain Zebra	67	356.54	23,887.76	1.4
Hippopotamus	31	2,068.26	64,117.43	3.8
Klipspringer	9	282.88	2,546.27	0.2
Kudu	55	449.38	24,718.57	1.5
Red Lechwe	13	1,190.35	15,474.59	0.9
Leopard	11	2,210.79	24,318.88	1.5
Lion	2	11,371.89	22,743.78	1.4

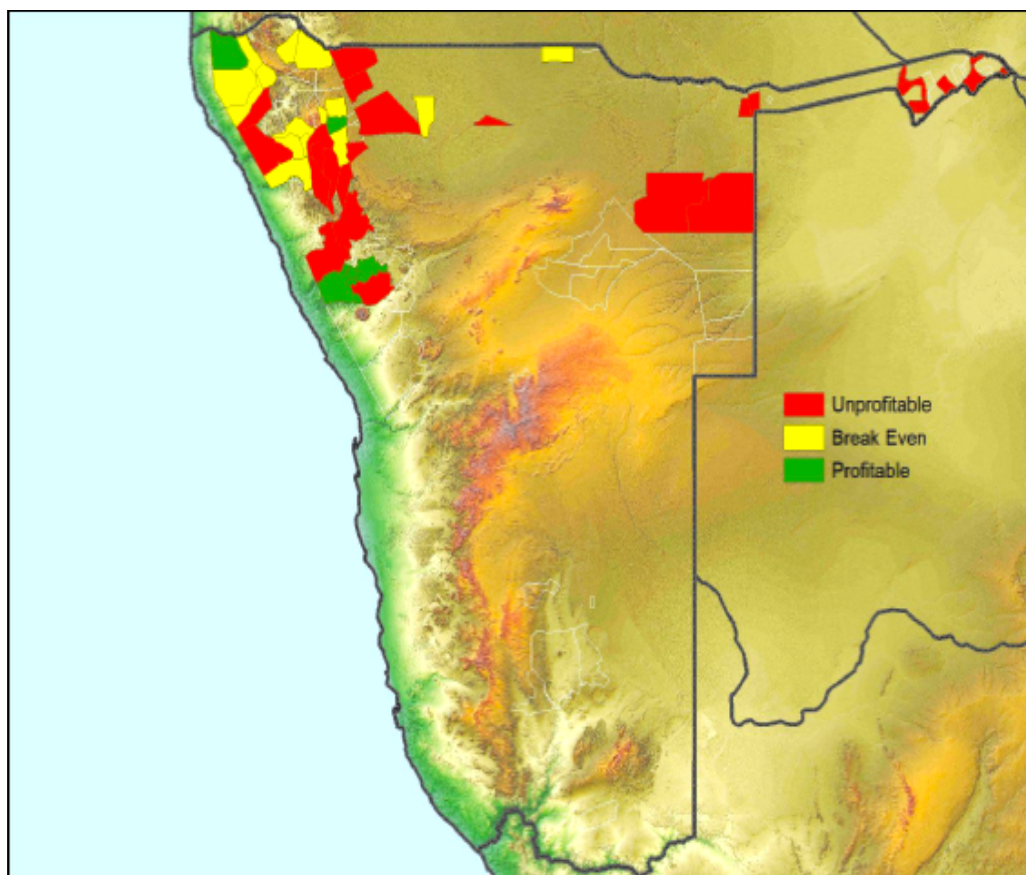
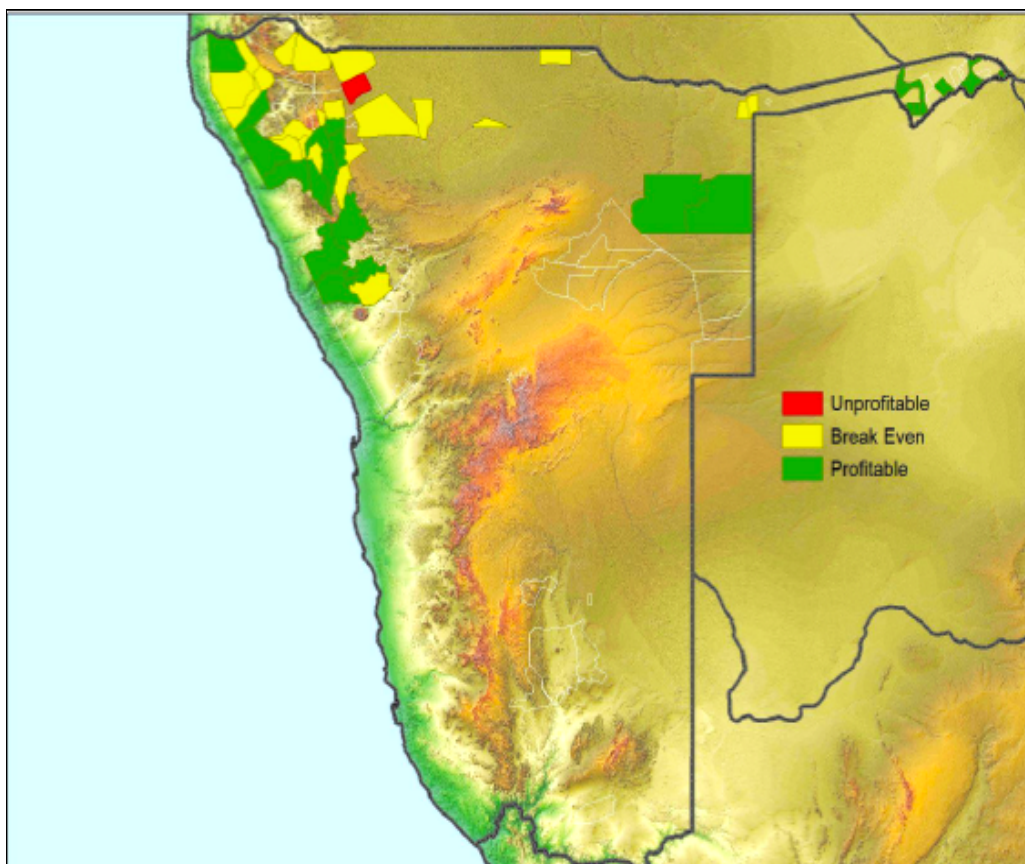


Ostrich	14	102.49	1,435.17	0.1
Reedbuck	3	591.29	1,773.86	0.1
Roan Antelope	9	4,385.68	39,470.95	2.4
Sable Antelope	9	5,290.46	47,614.11	2.8
Spotted Hyena	5	297.30	1,486.41	0.1
Springbok	89	154.56	13,756.85	0.8
Steenbok	10	89.73	897.61	0.1
Warthog	17	187.03	3,179.46	0.2
Waterbuck	1	1,037.34	1,037.34	0.1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,671,379.05</b>	<b>100</b>

Benefits generation across all conservancies in Namibia's Community-Based Natural Resource Management program, 1998-2013, from hunting (squares) and tourism (circles). (a) Total benefits; (b) Fee payments to conservancies; (c) Salaries from enterprise jobs; (d) Non-financial benefit



Right, and now to put all of these facts and figures into perspective. Below are two diagrams. The top diagram shows the current financial status of 50 conservancies here in Namibia. The diagram below shows the anticipated financial status of those very same conservancies were hunting to be banned on those conservancies, based upon current levels of income derived from tourism and trophy hunting:



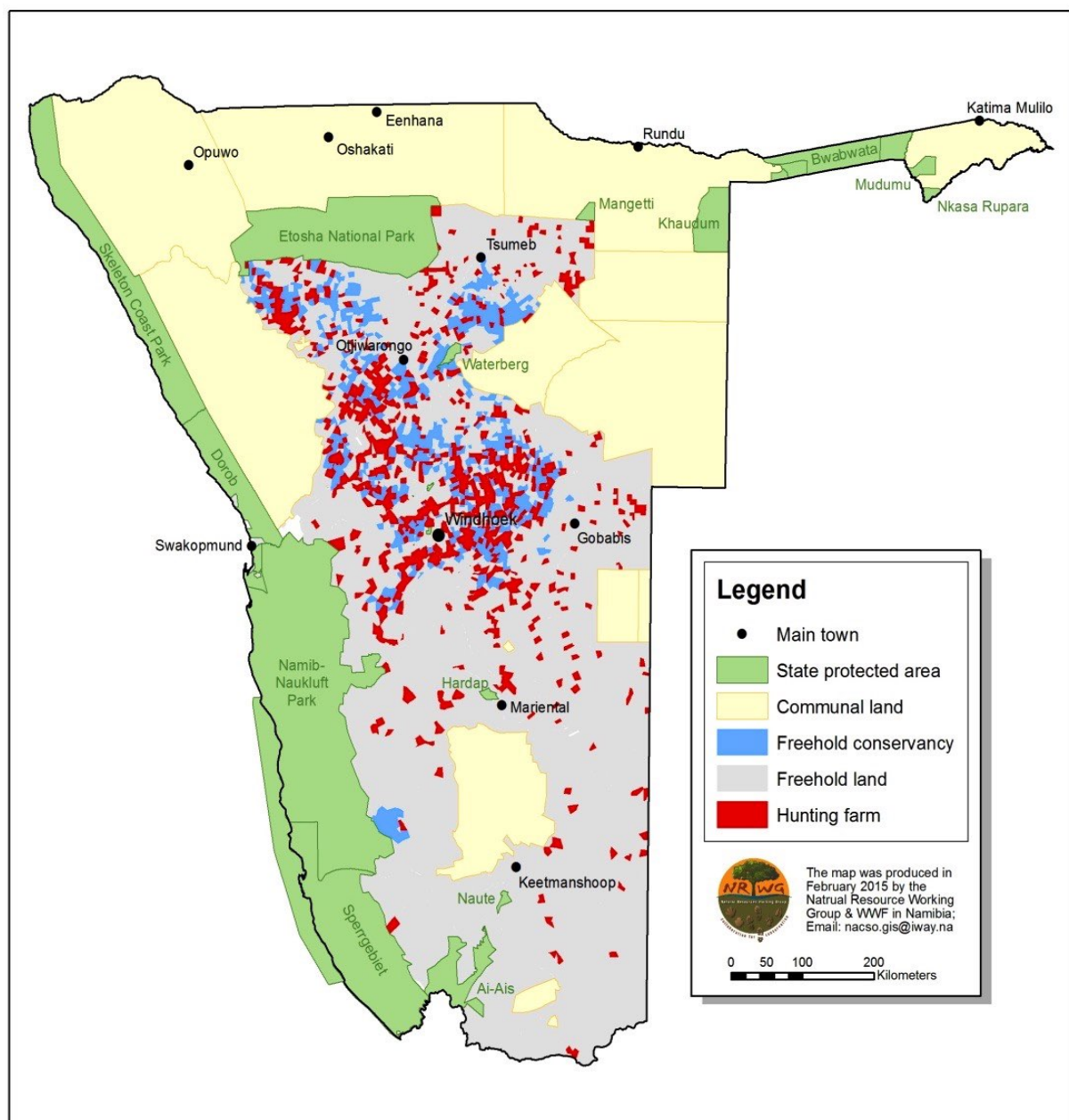
In other words, were trophy hunting to be banned in these conservancies, the vast majority of them (coloured in red) would no longer be financially viable. In other words, as we all know, poaching will become rife and the natural habitat of species such as plains game and the big 5 will be overrun with cattle and sheep, causing even more human/ wildlife conflict and the wholesale slaughter of wildlife in these areas.

### **Economic Benefits of Trophy Hunting on Commercial Farmland**

Due to increasing input costs, devaluation of the Namibian Dollar in relation to foreign currencies and global warming; agriculture in Namibia is, as it were, a dying industry. Agricultural production inflation is listed at 10.4% per annum, when compared to the Namibian Consumer Price Index of 6.7% and this disparity is increasing annually.

For this reason, commercial farmers in Namibia, as well as elsewhere in Africa, have been forced to diversify in order to survive economically.

Below is a diagram showing the number of diversified and exclusive hunting farms in Namibia:



According to government studies, hunting on commercial farms in Namibia generates in excess of 351 million Namibian Dollars per annum and commercial agriculture, as a whole, provides employment for 27.4% of the Namibian population. According to the Namibian Minister of Environment and tourism, should a ban be placed on trophy hunting, commercial farmers in Namibia would lose about 350 million Namibian Dollars in foreign earnings per annum. In addition to this, 50% of jobs would be lost on mixed livestock and hunting farms and 100% job losses would occur on exclusive hunting farms. This would translate to a loss of, at least, 3500 jobs in a country with an already high (28%) unemployment rate.

This does not even begin to address to loss in capital investment undertaken by Namibian farmers to diversify their farms in order to accommodate trophy hunting. It should be noted that the Namibian Minister of Environment and Tourism has also indicated that more than 80% of larger game animals are found on private commercial farmland today.

Were trophy hunting to be banned, it goes without saying that the number of game animals on commercial farms would have to be drastically reduced in order to provide grazing for cattle and game animal population numbers will experience a dramatic decline. Unemployment rates will increase dramatically, giving rise to increased social instability, crime (including poaching) and poverty.

### **Economic Benefits of Trophy Hunting to an Individual Farm**

Finally, and on a more personal level, we shall look at what trophy hunting means to a small mixed farming operation in Namibia, my farm.

In terms of this, I can attest to the following facts (whom my independent auditors are quite happy to confirm) in terms of income and expenditure derived from our various ventures:

	<b>CATTLE FARMING</b>	<b>ECO – TOURISM</b>	<b>TROPHY HUNTING</b>
Percentage of income for farm	50%	6%	44%
Number of employees	3	2	6
Number of guests per annum	0	100+	20 - 30
Percentage of expenditure per annum	20%	45%	35%

In other words, the following conclusions can be drawn from the above:

- Even though cattle farming provides the greater share of income for our farm, it provides very little employment for our local community when compared to the employment opportunities available with trophy hunting. In other words, trophy hunting provides a greater benefit to our local community than both tourism and cattle farming combined.
- Eco – tourism on its own would not be an economically viable business venture and we'd go bankrupt within a year or two, leading to job losses for our employees.
- Even though our eco – tourism arm is only responsible for 6% of our income, it requires 45% of our annual expenditure and only employs 2 persons.
- The beneficiaries of our various business ventures include the following:
  - o **Cattle Farming**: Ourselves, the government (taxes), downstream beneficiaries (Meatco, Agra, SWAVET, Meat Board, etc.) and our employees.

- **Eco – Tourism:** Ourselves, the government (taxes, NTB bed Levy, etc.) and our employees
  - **Trophy Hunting:** Ourselves, the government (taxes, NTB bed Levy, etc.), our employees, downstream beneficiaries (taxidermists, curio shops, grocery shops, firearm dealers, liquor outlets, etc.), local charities to whom we donate the meat from hunted animals (NG Church soup kitchen in Katutura, Oude Rust and Katutura Old Age Homes, Huis Maerua, etc.). In addition, our staff receive generous tips from our hunting clients on occasion and this improves their spending power which, in turn, supports further downstream businesses.
- Even though eco – tourism contributes the least amount of income for our business and provides the least amount of employment, it requires the greatest number of “boots on the ground” in terms of tourists to make it viable. In other words, a business that contributes the least amount of income is responsible for the greatest amount of carbon emissions, noise pollution, the greatest burden on our septic tanks, the greatest amount of diesel and vehicle pollution and the greatest amount of trampling of our vegetation.
  - Our cattle, our greatest source of revenue, also places a heavy burden on the environment in terms of habitat destruction, carbon emissions due to flatulence, pollution from factories producing their feed and the abattoirs that slaughter the cattle.
  - Our trophy hunters are few in number (by choice) and they place the lowest burden on the environment as a result thereof. Yet, they are responsible for 44% of our income, provide the greatest amount of employment and provide the greatest trickle down benefits to the Namibian economy in general.

The above facts and figures were not thought up, nor drawn from the ether, nor amended or altered to further an agenda, they are the truth and, as Winston Churchill stated “***The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it; but in the end, there it is***”

*Sir Winston Churchill – Prime Minister of Great Britain*

**HOWEVER**, when one delves further into the studies tabled at conferences, or published on the internet, one has to ask oneself where and how their facts and figures were derived, what their motives are and, most importantly of all, who financed their studies. Far too many of the reports that I read were published by, what I call “pseudo – scientists” moulding their findings to suit their agenda, or to satisfy their paymasters. I find it strange that most, if not all of the studies I found in the public domain were drafted by persons who have never even set foot in Africa, being financed by individuals and organisations who have seldom or never set foot in Africa and have no understanding of the situation on the ground; yet these very same people deem themselves qualified to dictate how we here in Africa should live our lives and take no cognisance of the intrinsic bond between life and death, people and nature; and the effects that their decisions, taken thousands of miles away, influence each and every human and animal here in Africa.



## Education on hunting by Axel Cramer, Treasurer of NAPHA

The NAPHA Executive Committee has prioritised the Education on hunting aspect and we thus want to share more insight into this important matter.

We as hunters play an important part and a leading role by following a rigid code of practice of our activities in order to promote conservation.

In the best interest of practical conservation dialog between hunting and non-hunting stakeholders is urgently necessary. This dialog can only be fruitful if discussion takes place on a common denominator and under avoidance of non-factual emotions.

Some non-hunting proponents believe that humans have evolved to a point where they can live without any animal products such as meat, milk, eggs, honey, leather, wool and other by-products. This in effect means a total renunciation from nature and, in light of human population explosion, ultimately would result in a total thrusting aside of natural environments. If this is the direction we do not have to discuss nature conservation any further.

However, such a decision has to be based on intimate understanding of all consequences and the education on natural connotations, especially in the light of the fact that the vast majority of the human population on earth considers nature very important. Education (the pre-condition for proper understanding and well-informed decision making) on nature and its functioning, as well as its interaction and interrelation with a healthy environment thus appears most important.

Moreover the Principle of Sustainable Use has to be properly explained and understood.

Unfortunately in the recent debate, scientific facts and common sense are totally inconsequential, while ideological campaigns are orchestrated with dramatic media events that are loaded with emotion and which generate massive public sympathy and consequently millions in public funding.

We moreover wish to point out, and we admit, that not everything is “gold that shines” within the hunting sector. Certain hunting practises are simply not acceptable. Very often hunters are rough and ready personalities believing to be in a position to “just live according to their own laws”, creating a very negative image for hunting. Education of hunters to ensure that hunting indeed is applied conservation is just as important, as is a proper understanding of natural connotations by the general public. Hunting has to be based on sustainability and not alter the ecological function of habitats and the species living therein.

To avoid future negative publicity for hunting, hunters certainly should be educated on ethical aspects as well as proper behaviour when interacting with the non-hunting sector.

We believe that in the best interest of practical conservation it is high time for mutual respect and an unemotional approach – on both sides.



## **Collaring and naming of wild animals by Danene van der Westhuyzen, Vice President of NAPHA**

Collaring of a few wild animals started off as a means to collect scientific data. It has almost developed into a mania to claim possession over free, wild creatures by certain interest groups. Add to this the hype of personalising wild animals by giving them names. Both these practices by now are utilised to undermine the sustainable use principle. Some critical analysis of the development is urgently needed.

Perception is the unique result of the picture in a person's mind when he sees or experiences something. It is the consciousness, awareness and understanding of something that generates a standpoint in our minds. Everyone looks at the same thing, everyone thinks something different. Give an egg to a bushman and he will suck it empty and create adornments. Give it to a Frenchman and he will fry it in butter. An American will bake it in lard. Perceptions are formed through two elements. The first element is experience. Life's significant experiences are filled with emotions and thoughts that play a big role in how our perceptions are formed.

A wounded animal. A free roaming lion. A caged lion. Enjoying a sundowner on top of a mountain. Shooting your first animal. Visiting a slaughtering house. The birth of a giraffe. An elephant crossing a river. Petting a tame cheetah. Watching vultures feed.

But this forms only half of the equation. The second element in the union of perceptions is information or the lack thereof. We are told that collaring is good, or we are told that it is bad. We are informed how to look at scientists, elephant, hunters, and predators. Animal behaviour is shown as gentle, kind, and funny through children's films. Biased news informs the public of brutal killings on wild animals. Social media rings in our ears with exploitable information. As soon as an animal is collared, it is labelled, and therefore seemingly owned by society. In some cases the public is encouraged to "adopt" an animal by making a yearly donation to it after which they will receive a thank you note signed with a paw-print. Some websites actually allow the world to view the movement of collared animals. Often uproar is raised against a hunted collared animal. Why? Because it was owned, kept and preserved as in a zoo? This animal is still part of nature, and belongs to no one but its Creator. Moreover, other interest groups are fellow participants in nature.

We live in the information age. But unfortunately many credible and informative papers, articles and briefings on ecosystems, wildlife and hunting by experienced professionals never reach the uninformed and, even worse, are regarded as untrustworthy.

What are our expectations of the wild nature we hope to still find? Since the beginning of time people have gathered by campfires. Adults and children are fascinated by stories and facts about wild animals. We idealise wild Africa as we experience it through Animal Planet's television camera, never collared, never manhandled, never darted. Just wild. In the mind's eye, Africa remains untouched. We do a yearly Namibia tour with our children where they choose the region, and somehow they love going back to Kaokoland, for which I am grateful as it is also one of my favourite parts. But my biggest fear is spotting yet another collared animal. How do I explain this to them? That the elephant cow around the corner in the Hoarusib river was not our secret discovery. That it is just not free and wild anymore. That a human has handled it. Its dignity lost through my and my children's eyes.

It is important to note that expectations for experiencing nature have changed remarkably through the years, guided by increasing scientific and ecological knowledge, Disney movies, and cultural understanding.

Through scientific studies with collars, monitoring of wild animals has provided conservation professionals with insights into how to protect and manage threatened populations. We have also learned a lot about the species as a whole. But have the wildlife television programmes ever shown the downside of these collars? The weight burden, rejection, fights, death and pain that the individuals of these species have to endure?

In fact, some ideologically orientated groups collar animals to undermine the sustainable use principle. In October 2015 a German trophy hunter has taken one of the largest elephants recorded in nearly 30 years, and now a Zimbabwean conservation group wants to make him infamous, like the killer of Cecil the lion. Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force Chairman, Johnny Rodrigues even went so far as stating in bluntly; “He had a permit but he should have used his common sense to say, this is a majestic animal, and to report it to the authorities or to conservation groups. **We would have collared it,**” said Rodrigues.<sup>8</sup>

Zoe Jewell from WildTrack ([www.wildtrack.org](http://www.wildtrack.org)) believes that “too much emphasis is put on the use of collars for 'conservation' – many conservation groups put on collars without a second thought about how they will be removed if causing problems to the animal, or even how that funding could be better deployed for using more cost-effective techniques for conservation, ideally also engaging and benefitting local people. At best, collaring, used properly, can be a useful tool to investigate parameters (range, behaviour, some physiological measures) for a few animals. At worst it is a serious distraction from anti-poaching and human-wildlife conflict remediation – both of which are better addressed by effective local 'boots on the ground' and strong conservation and community management infrastructure.”

Zoe Jewell and Sky Alibhai promote non-invasive techniques. They have developed a footprint identification technique (FIT) which is not only a step in the right direction, but an excellent example of using the traditional methods of the ancient art of tracking as a way into the future. Many other scientists worldwide are moving towards non-invasive techniques as a substitute for collaring. I have witnessed at first hand the outrage that some Namibian scientists show towards collaring, not only because they have seen its devastating effect on the individual, but also because the scientific results have become questionable due to the changes in the behaviour of the animals fitted with collars. Such results are misleading and dangerous because they create the illusion that something useful has been done, and may be unreliable.

The information that we are fed through television does not include this negative picture. The every day human being snacking on popcorn while watching wildlife programmes becomes distraught by the kings vanishing. But add the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of a collared animal and the sometimes terrible lot the animals have to endure for the camera-team (or whoever) to be able to air the television programme will most probably change his perspective, and possibly to even greater distress.

In Yellowstone Park in the United States, tourists of the first half of the twentieth century saw no harm in feeding snacks to bears “begging” by the roadside. But the cultural understanding that painted bears as charming bandits also created an unsustainable situation involving disruptive feeding patterns, numerous personal injuries to humans – resulting in control measures ending in death for many bears.<sup>9</sup>

Just recently, a woman was dragged from a car and killed in a lion park in South Africa while she was taking photos of the same lion less than one meter away from the car with her window open.<sup>10</sup> Easy peasy, the way they do on the television. Human intervention clearly plays a huge part in the behavioural changes that animals present.

In Zimbabwe, a lion wearing a satellite collar for research purposes killed a guide leading a walking tour through Hwange National Park. Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Authority didn't specify

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<sup>8</sup> Walket, P. 2015. German elephant hunter will be named and shamed, vows Zimbabwe taskforce. The Guardian. 16 October.

<sup>9</sup> Pritchard, J.A. 1999. Preserving Yellowstone's natural conditions. Science and the Perception of Nature. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

<sup>10</sup> Findlay, S. 2015. US woman dragged from car and killed by lion in South African park. The Telegraph. 1 June.

which of the lions attacked him but noted that one member of the pride, named Nxaha, wore a tracking collar.<sup>11</sup>

Collared lions are observed to be particularly aggressive, as during the collaring process they are chased around by ground personnel or helicopter, helplessly aware of humans chasing them and therefore considerably traumatised before collaring. Add some slow, heartbreaking music to this scene, and you will have the next social media outbreak, for sure.

In Namibia in the 1990s all lions in Bushmanland were collared and hot-branded for research. All died afterwards from various causes resulting from this. One lion had to be removed after having mauled an American hunting client before being shot. A whole lion population collapsed.

GPS collars are notoriously unreliable and are very costly; they are overweight and have short battery lives. Because of this, regular darting is necessary to replace the collars. The consequences are devastating. Some animals have to face a life without ever losing the burden of a collar. It has been proven that it is almost impossible to re-catch a jackal fitted with a collar, which leaves him attached to it forever; as an animal gains condition or grows, the collar can tighten and strangle it.

With collaring, wild dogs possibly lose their hierarchy. This must be one of the most stressful experiences an animal can face: rejection from its pack. Fighting for the position he always had, and has lost within a matter of moments, without even the faintest idea why.

Research by Zoe Jewell and Sky Alibhai (2000)<sup>12</sup> from WildTrack showed that regular immobilisation to replace collars (usually failed collars because the technology is still generally unreliable) caused the female black rhino inter-calving interval to drop from one calf every three years to one calf every ten years. They suspect this was due to a combination of the potent drugs used and the fact that the chase (particularly in the dry season – the only time it's practical to do it) is very stressful for the animal. From the veterinary perspective, no vet in his/her right mind would attempt to immobilise a pregnant mare in this manner, the results are therefore probably not unexpected. Of course, such a drop in fertility is a disaster for an endangered species.

They also found that some collars, applied in the dry season, were becoming too tight on the rhino in the wet season (because they'd gained so much neck girth/condition) and had caused serious neck wounds.<sup>13</sup>

In a study on the effects of collar weight on zebra, unexpected results showed that a significant effect on the zebra's natural behaviour occurred. A weight difference of a mere few hundred grams has had a significant influence on the movement of zebras.<sup>14</sup>

The only advantage an individual animal might gain from being collared is where it would serve as protecting its neck against fights and snares. Again, nature has not taken its own course, and a predator might sleep hungry tonight.

Humanity needs to decide what its perspective is on wild nature. Does it include collared animals? Are we not losing the essence of nature as we dream of it? The discovery and rediscovery of what we track down walking in the veld, observing animals in their natural state without any human intervention, the surprise behaviour we witness that cannot be found in any guide-book, perhaps only in the mind-boggling narrative of a San tracker.

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<sup>11</sup> Associated Press. 2015. Zimbabwe tour guide dies protecting tourist from lion. The National World. 26 August.

<sup>12</sup> Alibhai, S.K. Jewell, Z.C. and Towindo, S.S. 2000. Effects of immobilization on fertility in female black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*). *Journal of Zoology* (Impact Factor: 1.88). 02/2001; 253(3):333 – 345.

<sup>13</sup> Alibhai, S.K. & Jewell, Z.C. 2001. Field Studies: Animal immobilization. *Oryx* 35 (4): 284-288.

<sup>14</sup> Brooks, Bonyongo, and Harris, S. 2008. Effects of Global Positioning System collar weight on zebra behavior and location error. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 72(2):527-534.

Yes, we need science to help us understand the species, but what about the mystery of the animal? Does that not also make up part of what we are seeking in nature? This is what draws us to sit around the fire, fascinated by animals – the making of Africa in all its glory. The constant alertness in the veld and vigilant seeking of Africa's enigma. But will it be the same knowing that the jackal howling far away is fitted with a collar, wondering whether the vulture feeding on a cheetah kill is free of any obstructions, and hoping that the lion that I have stalked and tracked for ten days will not reek of the stink of man?

This, of course, is where the question will be asked whether collaring, even if it has its negative effects, is still not better than killing? What hunting brings to the environmental equation is a sense of realism all too frequently lacking in what might be called popular environmentalism – that tendency to want to preserve nature “unaffected by man”. Hunters, after all, know about blood, about the tissue-thin boundary between life and death; that life and death feed off one another in nature. Ultimately, what we learn from hunting is the lesson not simply of our own mortality but, more importantly, of our participation in the life/death/life cycle of the natural world. Mary Zeiss Stange maybe answers the question best: “Yes! To live the hunting life fully, conscientiously, ethically, and unapologetically. To teach by lived example, with humility and without regret, that all life feeds on death, including – eventually – our own.”<sup>15</sup>

Here is the bottom line: bad experience and substandard information result in faulty perceptions, which lead to misdirection and disconnection.

On the other hand, better experiences and better information result in proper perceptions. These in turn lead to direction and connection, a vital tool for the survival of Africa as we know it... to what we truly want it to be.

One should not be afraid to re-experience things that matter. One should seek out new information from reliable sources.

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<sup>15</sup> Stange, M.Z. 2014. Hunting/Human/Nature. *Minding Nature*: September 2014, Volume 7, Number 3

## Conclusion

With this discourse the NAPHA EXCO has tried to honestly provide background on hunting, its motives and its role as a successful conservation tool, to allow for well-informed decision making, especially of the general public.

Irrespective of the fact that deep down there is a mutual desire to return to, and to experience unspoiled nature and to protect it, we had to realise that in the ideological battle between the hunting fraternity and non-hunting conservation groups, as well as the animal rightist movement, none of the groups seem to be prepared to build bridges and to close trenches. It is our hope that in the best interest of practical conservation a rational debate is possible.

We hunters believe that it is the most basic right of wild animals is to lead a natural life in a natural environment according to the laws of nature. The destruction of natural habitats by modern man is the biggest threat to this basic animal right.

The question whether man should be allowed to experience nature and be part of it, is a question of individual choice and should be subject of mutual tolerance. The defamatory campaigns against legal trophy hunters, who, out of the very nature of this particular type of hunting, in fact make the most important single contribution to conservation of true wilderness, comes down to the violation of basic human rights. We do not question the important role of conservation groups to watch over basic conduct and to point out malpractices like “canned hunting”, “pseudo-hunts”, which feed the illegal trade in wildlife products or criticise corruption. NAPHA in fact has right away condemned these happenings. But we consider it unfair to blame hunting as such for individual wrongdoings. Nobody has yet demanded a ban on soccer because of the unbelievable corruption within FIFA.

In Namibia the Concept of Sustainable Utilisation of Natural Resources has hugely contributed to social upliftment and economic empowerment in remote rural regions and resulted in the protection of natural habitats. This success story should not be jeopardised by purely ideological campaigns and without providing a workable alternative.

## **Some background on the Association by Tanja Dahl, CEO of NAPHA**

Along the south-western coast of Africa lies Namibia, a barren country embraced by the Namib and Kalahari Deserts, which stretches inland from some of the most desolate and lonely beaches on earth - however, a country with an abundance of natural assets. It has been called Africa's harsh paradise.

Namibia is Africa's harsh paradise indeed and, moreover, it is a hunter's paradise. For the international hunting clientele, one of the main attractions of hunting in Namibia is the high standard of ethics maintained by the Namibia Professional Hunting Association (NAPHA). All hunting resorts are under the strict supervision of the Directorate of Resource Management of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET).

NAPHA is a voluntary Association for Professional Hunters, Hunting Guides, Hunting Assistants and individuals as well as businesses with a vested interest in the hunting profession. Furthermore, individuals and businesses with an interest in the Association's objectives can become sponsoring members, therefore NAPHA is proud to boast a membership of about 450. The Association is recognised by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism as the official representative of the trophy Hunting Sector in Namibia.

NAPHA's Mission Statement includes our striving to ensure and promote ethical conduct, sustainable utilisation of natural resources and our conviction to secure the industry for current and future generations, thereby contributing to the Namibian Nation's economy and its wildlife management.

A proud 40-year history of ethical trophy hunting of the highest standard in Namibia has revealed that sustainable utilisation of wildlife resources has been a major factor in protecting our game populations. Even depleted game species, which formerly populated areas of Namibia, have been re-introduced through effective game management based on the principle of conservation through selective hunting. NAPHA is therefore convinced that man's oldest cultural heritage, namely hunting, carried out through sustainable game utilisation, is an effective tool to ensure the survival of wildlife and the well-being of local communities.

The basis of our operation is our office in Windhoek, manned by a staff complement of three people, headed by a Chief Executive Officer. The annually elected NAPHA Board consists of five NAPHA members, headed by a NAPHA Chairperson. Various Sub-Committees assist the Association on specific projects, such as environmental protection, care and management of wildlife and educational endeavours.

The Association works in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment & Tourism and various NGO's and stakeholders in the tourism industry.

NAPHA's income is derived from annual membership fees, medal sales and sponsorships. It is not always easy for a Membership Association to maintain the balance between Membership interests and the important high standard of ethical conduct. Sponsorships from conservation orientated institutions help the association tremendously in maintaining this goal.